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THE WORDS OF

THE SON OF GOD

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THE WORDS

OF THE

SON OF GOD

Taken from the Four Gospels

AND ARRANGED FOR DAILY MEDITATION
THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

BY

ELEANOR PLUMPTRE

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PREFACE.

THERE are books with Scripture texts for daily use throughout the year, but, as the Words spoken by our Lord Jesus Christ do not appear to have been specially set apart for this purpose, my object has been so to arrange them that readers may be able to meditate day by day on a few of them, and on the great lessons they teach.

The Words of Jesus as recorded in the Four Gospels, are apportioned to the four quarters of the year. The notes taken from Canon Walsham How's Commentary on "The Four Gospels," published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and those from other Authors, often necessarily abbreviated, have been selected in the hope of aiding the reader's meditations.

May God bless this attempt to bring home His Son's Words with power to our hearts! E. P.

LONDON, *October*, 1877.

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"BE NOT WEARY IN WELL-DOING."

WHATE'ER thy path in life may be,
  Though dreary seem the way,
Pursue the course marked out for thee
  With courage day by day.
Look not aside, but onward go;
  Thou wilt find peace in doing so.

We all have some appointed task,
  Some mission to fulfil;
If thine be hard, for guidance ask
  To carry out God's will.
Under His shield thou did'st engage
To fight throughout thy pilgrimage.

And having vow'd to serve the Lord,
  Would'st thou unfaithful prove?
Not so. Trust Him—believe His Word—
  He is a God of Love.
Then fear not, yield not to despair,
But arm thyself with hope and prayer.

God sees the struggles of thy heart,
  Thy difficulties, all;
And will fresh strength to those impart
  Who humbly on Him call;
Nor will He suffer that thou be
Tried more than He sees good for thee.

The Life and Words of Jesus still
  Point out the way to Heav'n.
Oh! follow Him, and so fulfil
  The pledge which thou hast giv'n.
They who the Cross take up and bear
May hope a heavenly crown to wear.

—*E. P.*

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ERRATA.

Page 8, line 31, *for* compare *read* conquer.

,, 10, ,, 38, *for* sure *read* sore.

.. 20, ,, 26, *for* devoutly *read* discreetly.

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JANUARY 1.

The Baptism of Jesus.

MATT. iii. 13-17.

"THEN cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad Him, saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us[1] to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered Him. And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a Voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son,[2] in Whom I am well pleased."

[1] "For thus it becometh us."] "Our Lord here gives the reason why He submitted to be baptized, and that with the baptism which was 'for the remission of sins.' He must 'fulfil all righteousness,' that is, all the requirements of the Law. But why? Because He made Himself '*sin for us*,' and He needs must fulfil all that sin required: firstly, that He might entirely put Himself in our place, and bear our sins in His own Person; and secondly, that He might set us an example of perfect obedience." *See* the Collect for the Circumcision.

[2] "Mark how this acknowledgment of Jesus as *the Son* takes place at His Baptism. He was the Son before, even from everlasting; yet now it is proclaimed. May we not in this see a pledge of our adoption as children of God in Holy Baptism? Jesus is our great Head, the Representative of our race, *the Son of Man*; and just as in the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Him we behold a pledge of the gift of the same Divine Spirit in our Baptism, so in the 'Voice from heaven' we receive a pledge of our own adoption to be children of God in the same Sacrament. God beholds each baptized child as a member of His beloved Son, and for that beloved Son's sake He says of it, 'This is My child.'"—*Canon How.*

"Within the Jordan's sacred flood
The Heavenly Lamb in meekness stood,
That He to Whom no sin was known
Might cleanse His people from their own."

"Almighty God, grant that we, being regenerate, and made Thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by Thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee, and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen."

"For us He was baptized, and bore
His holy fast and hungered sore;
For us temptations sharp He knew;
For us the tempter overthrew."

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JANUARY 2.

The Temptation.

MATT. iv. 1-11.

"THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered. And when the tempter came to Him, he said, If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God (Deut. viii. 3). Then the devil taketh Him up into the holy city, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down: for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee, and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone (Ps. xci. 11, 12.) Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God (Deut. vi. 16). Again, the devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me. Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve (Deut. vi. 13, x. 20). Then the devil leaveth Him, and behold, angels came and ministered unto Him."[1]

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[1] "When you are tempted, meet the tempter with words of Holy Scripture; for this is to use 'the sword of the Spirit,' and Jesus gave us the example of doing this when He answered all Satan's temptations by 'It is written.' But in order to do this, you must live in the habit of reading and thinking upon some part of it *daily*."—"*Ways of Overcoming Temptation.*"

"We should often consider *whence* our temptations chiefly arise, and pray God to succour us *where* we most need His help."—*Canon Woodford.*

"O Gracious Saviour, Who didst continue fasting and praying forty days and forty nights together in the desert, and after divers temptations didst overcome Satan; Grant that I may chastise my flesh, and exercise myself in fasting, watching, prayer, and other spiritual exercises, and subdue all evil affections which rebel against the Spirit; and be merciful to me. Amen."—*Litany of Bishop Andrewes.*

"Christian life is a struggle, at times a very stern and bitter one. There are times when we are tempted so strongly to yield to some sin, that not yielding seems like cutting off our very right hand. Then what does Christ say? Yield not! This is the hour of your trial; stand fast, quit you like a man, be strong. Resist the devil; resist again and again—every resistance is one step nearer heaven."—*Rev. W. Benham.*

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JANUARY 3.

The Preaching of Christ.

MATT. iv. 17-22.

"FROM that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent:[1] for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed Him. And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and He called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed Him."[2]

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[1] . . . "Repentance is the first step towards Christ. . . . In St. Mark's Gospel (vi. 12) we find that the Apostles, after their solemn call and commission, went out and preached that men 'should repent.' And when the Holy Ghost was given on the Day of Pentecost, and the people were 'pricked in their heart' at St. Peter's preaching, and asked, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' the apostle's first word in answer is, 'Repent' (Acts ii. 38). And what then is this all-important thing, *Repentance?* It is not mere sorrow, however deep and sincere. This is only the beginning of repentance, for St. Paul says, 'Godly sorrow *worketh repentance*' (2 Cor. vii. 10). Also, the word used in the New Testament for 'repentance' means a good deal more than 'godly sorrow.' It means a thorough change of heart—a change from sin to godliness, from evil thoughts and desires to good, from earth to heaven. This is no light change. It is often called 'conversion,' which means a turning round, a complete and entire change. But, according to our present use of the words, repentance is a wider word than conversion; for conversion generally means the turning to God after a long course of sin, while repentance is used for the turning to God after *any* sin. Thus conversion is that which the more hardened sinner needs. But *all* need repentance, for the best have daily sins and shortcomings to repent of." —*Canon How.*

[2] "O Saviour of the world! Thy call,
In cottage home and palace hall,
Is wanting to supply
Those who, like James, their fisher's net,
Or Paul, their learnèd ease forget,
For Thee to live and die."

—*Monsell.*

"Almighty God, Who didst give such grace unto Thy holy Apostle Saint Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and followed Him without delay; Grant unto us all, that we, being called by Thy Holy Word, may forthwith give up ourselves obediently to fulfil Thy holy commandments; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."—*Collect for St. Andrew's Day.*

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JANUARY 4.

Blessedness.

MATT. v. 1-12.

"SEEING the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."[1]

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[1] "We cannot pass on without one glance back on this most beautiful portion of the Sermon on the Mount. It is the picture of the man whom Christ declares 'blessed.' Very wonderful is this picture in itself. It is a picture to gaze upon and to study, and to learn by heart, and to set side by side with that of our own sinful selves, that we may both be humbled by seeing how little we are like it, and also strive to win a fuller share of its blessedness. It is also a wonderful opening to the whole Sermon. The great subject of that Sermon is, as we shall see more fully farther on, the nature of *Christian righteousness*, which is shewn by applying God's law in the spirit and not in the letter, and which is a far truer, deeper, more spiritual righteousness, than that of the Scribes and Pharisees." . . . Our Lord "draws a glowing picture of the 'blessed,' and, holding that up and pointing to it, says, as it were, 'Now listen while I unfold to you the hidden elements of strength and beauty which make up this perfect whole.' Observe, too, how this picture is entirely that of a *spiritual* holiness, such as the whole Sermon enforces. It is no *doing* of this or that *duty* which is declared so 'blessed.' Christ goes at once to the heart. His picture is by a few masterly strokes full of the living inward graces which form and stamp and characterize the Christian man. It is the spirit and not the body; the light and shade and colour, not the mere outline; the kernel and not the shell, which we are looking on now. The poor in spirit, the mourners, the meek, the hungry and thirsty after righteousness, the peacemakers, the persecuted; here is surely a picture of a righteousness exceeding that of the Scribes and Pharisees. For is it not in very truth a picture of Him Who drew it?"—*Canon How.*

"Oh may we tread the sacred road
That saints and holy martyrs trod:
Wage to the end the glorious strife,
And win, like them, a crown of life. Amen."

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JANUARY 5.

"The Salt of the Earth."

MATT. v. 13-20.

"YE are the salt[1] of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour,[2] wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light[3] of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven.[4] Think not that I am come to destroy the Law, or the Prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle[5] shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."[6]

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[1] "The salt."] "To preserve the world from corruption."

[2] . . . "If the teachers of the world become spiritually corrupt and graceless, who shall teach and turn them? They are like tasteless salt: they can give no savour to anything else, nor is there anything else which can give savour to them. An awful warning to the faithless Christian minister."

[3] "The light."] Not the "true light," for Christ is "the true Light, Which lighteth every man." Christ's people shine with borrowed light, as the moon and planets with that of the sun. They are like a shining "cloud of witnesses" (Heb. xii. 1).

[4] Here compare St. Matthew vi. 18, and we may frame this rule for our guidance: "Do openly whatever is commanded, that men may glorify God; do secretly all else, that men may not glorify thee."—*Canon How.*

"It is the duty of all Christians to shine as lights in the world" (Phil. ii. 15). —*Dr. Whitby.*

[5] "The 'jot' was the smallest of the Hebrew letters; the 'tittle' a very little mark by which one letter was known from another. What a mighty testimony does this verse give, not only to the truth of the Old Testament, but also to its perfect unity with the New! Unbelievers have always begun by slighting the Old Testament. Let any tempted to do so remember that Old and New must stand or fall together, and that those who attack the Old Testament are knocking away the foundations from Christianity itself. In this verse the Son of God has Himself set His seal to the truth of the Old Testament."

[6] . . . "It might well make us tremble to hear thus of the greater righteousness required from the Christian, but that we know that He Who thus deepens and broadens our view of God's Law also gives the strength and grace to do it, and by His own perfect obedience wins for us pardon for our failure in the doing." —*Canon How.*

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JANUARY 6.

Evil Tempers.

MATT. v. 21-26.

"YE have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment (Exod. xx. 13; Deut. v. 17): but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.[1] Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.[2] Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison.[3] Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing."[4]

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[1] . . . "The Scribes and Pharisees taught that to break the sixth commandment was simply to take another's life, and they had no idea of any other way of breaking it. This was to understand it in the *letter*. Our Lord teaches that bad feelings and bad words equally break this commandment. This is to understand it in the *spirit*. The reason why anger and unkind words break the sixth commandment is plainly because they are signs of the same evil temper in the heart, which, when given way to, leads the murderer to his awful sin. Think how many more murders there would be but for fear of consequences. Sin must be sought out in its *root*. The Jew only saw it when its deadly *fruit* was ripe."

[2] . . . "No offering, no prayer or praise, no self-denial or deed of charity, much more no offering of soul and body at the Christian altar, the holy Table of the Lord, can be acceptable to God if it comes from a heart defiled with anger and strife and an unforgiving temper."

[3] . . . "It is not the vengeance of your enemy that you should fear, but, as an earthly enemy, if you will not make peace, may take his revenge and get you cast into prison, so will God's offended law condemn you and cast you into hell if you cherish pride and resentment against your brother when you should seek peace and forgiveness."—*Canon How.*

[4] "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Ephes. iv. 26).

"O King of peace, give us Thy peace; keep us in love and charity!"—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Peace is essential to holiness. . . . . Christ must say to the internal tumult, as of old to the winds and waves, 'Peace, be still;' and when He has made a great calm, we may then rectify our aim, and set forth on our voyage with renewed effort."—*Goulburn's "Pursuit of Holiness."*

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Christians must be pure in Heart, Word, and Deed.

MATT. v. 27-37.

"YE have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery (Exod. xx. 14; Deut. v. 18): but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.[1] And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.[2] It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement (Deut. xxiv. 1): but I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths (Lev. xix. 12; Num. xxx. 2): but I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is His footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the Great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay:[3] for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

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[1] "Our Lord now deals with the seventh commandment as He before dealt with the sixth. As an evil temper or a bitter word breaks that, so does an impure look break this. Well may we say, 'Thy commandment is exceeding broad'" (Ps. cxix. 96). *See* Rom. vi. 21, 23.

[2] "The 'right eye' and the 'right hand' are our dearest and best possessions. The meaning is that everything, even that which is most precious, must be sacrificed at once if it lead us into sin. To 'offend' means literally to make to stumble." *See* Col. iii. 5.

[3] "That is, the simple truth in simple words. St. James's words (ch. v. 12) should be compared with this verse. . . . The Christian should be so entirely truthful and open, that no oath could make his words stronger. He should speak the truth from his heart."—*Canon How.*

"Be content with simple affirmation and simple denial."—*Bishop Moberly.*

"Let us, then, not only never take God's Name in vain, but promote also in all we say that practice of universal truth which would make it plainly practicable to swear not at all."—*Girdlestone.*

"Oh that Thy Holy Spirit may direct and rule my heart, O God, through Jesus Christ!"—*Bishop Wilson.*

"O Lord, make me pure in heart, that I may see Thee, my God!"

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Returning Good for Evil.

MATT. v. 38-48.

"YE have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth (Exod. xxi. 24; Lev. xxiv. 20): but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.[1] And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy (Lev. xix. 18): but I say unto you, Love your enemies,[2] bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father Which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others?[3] do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father Which is in heaven is perfect."

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[1] "The law of Moses exacted a punishment of the same kind as the injury done. This the Jew thought a permission to private revenge. . . . Our Lord goes to the root of the matter, and condemns all revengeful feelings and acts, teaching the Christian to return good for evil. . . . We must observe that this passage only concerns our private conduct, and cannot be applied to the laws of the land, and to the punishments they inflict."

[2] "Love your enemies."] "Thus did our Lord 'fulfil' the law of love, widening it till it embraces all the world, and leaves no 'enemies' to hate save sin and the devil."—*Canon How.*

"Instead of taking vengeance on an enemy, do him all the good you can. Give him meat in his hunger, and drink in his thirst. Let these be the only coals of fire which you heap upon his head. Compare his wrongs with your benefits. Never allow yourself to be so far defeated by another man's evil as to seek to repay it with evil. When he does you wrong, look upon it that he has challenged you, as it were, to battle; and see that you win the battle by doing him more good than he does you evil."—*Bishop Moberly.*

[3] "Must we not expect Him to repeat this question for each of us individually when we stand before His judgment-seat at the great Day of Account? Oh may He stir within us now that spirit of holy emulation, that hunger and thirst after righteousness, which He has promised not to disappoint, that, when He shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before Him at His coming!"—*Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion."*

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JANUARY 9.

Almsgiving and Prayer.

MATT. vi. 1-8.

"TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father Which is in heaven.[1] Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father Which seeth in secret Himself shall reward thee openly. And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father Which is in secret;[2] and thy Father Which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him."[3]

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[1] "The blessedness of almsgiving, so constantly taught in God's Word, is nowhere displayed so remarkably as in the description of the great judgment of all nations in chap. xxv. (*see* especially verses 40 and 45)."—*Canon How.*

"What is required in the present day is the broad enunciation of the truth that all property is God's, and that some portion of it shall be rendered back to Him by those who are His stewards, in acknowledgment of the fact that their holding is from Him. This truth must be unceasingly proclaimed, until it is intelligently accepted and honestly practised by all, rich and poor alike. The spiritual advantages of systematic giving to works of piety and charity are no less valuable to the donor than to the Church herself. The offering to God is a part of public worship, and should be no more omitted than any other part of public worship."—*Parish Magazine.*

[2] "This may be fulfilled both literally and as a figure: literally, by withdrawing to some secret place for private prayer; as a figure, by entering at any time into the secret chamber of the heart, and there holding communion with God."

[3] "If so, why then should we pray? Not to inform God of our needs, but because He wills to give to those that ask. It is the same with confession of sin. It may be said, Why confess our sins to God, Who knows them far better than we do? Not to teach *God* our sinfulness, but to teach *ourselves*."—*Canon How.*

"Blessed are they who realize that the prayer of a contrite heart is ever acceptable to the Most High, and who unite with a life of prayer, offerings of praise and thanksgiving."—*Dean Duncombe.*

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Prayer and Fasting.

MATT. vi. 9-18.

"AFTER this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father Which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy Will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.[1] For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father Which is in secret: and thy Father, Which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."[2]

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[1] "The Lord's Prayer, for a succession of solemn thoughts, for fixing the attention on a few great points, for suitableness to every condition, for sufficiency, for conciseness without obscurity, for the weight and real importance of its petitions, is without an equal or a rival."—*Archdeacon Paley.*

[2] . . . "Fasting is here spoken of exactly in the same terms as almsgiving and prayer, as an acknowledged religious duty. Surely in these self-indulgent days we neglect this means of grace very sadly. This is not the fault of our Church, which clearly enjoins fasting, and appoints the days for it. It is well to understand both what fasting is, and what is its use. Fasting is the denial to ourselves of lawful and ordinary indulgence. *In the letter*, fasting is abstinence in eating and drinking; and this may be in quality or in quantity, or in both. *In the spirit*, fasting may be extended to all usual and lawful indulgences, such as going into company, light reading, and pleasure-seeking of all sorts; or again, to the undertaking of tasks which require some sacrifice of time or convenience, such as adding to the length of our ordinary prayers and reading of God's Word, devoting certain time to the visiting of the sick, or other labours of love. . . . All subduing and keeping under of the flesh is helping to gain the victory for the spirit. Moreover, the subduing of the flesh is a great help towards the resistance of temptation; those who learn to curb and restrain themselves in things lawful are far more able to do so in things unlawful. . . . No one can doubt that the soul is more free and active for prayer and meditation when restraint has been put upon the appetite than when free indulgence has been given to it. Heaviness of body is a sure hindrance to activity of spirit. The error against which our Lord warns us is that of making fasting a mere formal, outward act, as though it were good and meritorious *in itself*, and not simply a means of grace. They that fast in mere formality, and for the praise of men, are 'hypocrites' like the Pharisees. The true Christian will fast, but he will never make a display of it. True, he will not be ashamed of it, but he will so fast that God, and not man, may see and approve."—*Canon How.*

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JANUARY 11.

The Single and the Evil Eye.

MATT. vi. 19-23.

"LAY not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.[1] The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.[2] If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

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[1] . . . "Why, asks St. Augustine, does Christ desire that thou change the place of thy treasure, except that thou mayest change the place of thy heart? For a man's treasure is only that which his heart careth for. It is the loadstar which will of necessity draw the heart and affections after it. It is impossible for a man to have his treasure upon earth and his heart in heaven."—*Canon How.*

[2] "The '*single* eye' is doubtless to be interpreted by a reference to what follows, 'No man can serve *two* masters.' . . . Our Lord here describes two extreme spiritual states, the highest and the lowest. The first is characterized by a single eye, *i.e.* a pure intention in all things to please God out of love. If the eye be thus 'single,' the intention thus pure, 'thy whole body shall be full of light,' *i.e.* every action of yours shall be spiritualized, sanctified, interpenetrated by the luminousness of the intention. The lowest and worst spiritual state is that . . . of an *evil* eye. This is where the soul intends from perverse motives to do wrong, as was exemplified in the Pharisees, who, though convinced of the truth of Christ's mission, bent their whole strength to put down the truth. Of this latter state He says, 'Where the ruling aim is depraved, how dark must the whole lower life of action be, which at best has never any light in itself, but is lit by the ruling aim!' . . . Those who know most of human life and of their own hearts know that *very, very rarely indeed* is any action done from one single motive. . . . Purity of intention is the highest spiritual state. . . . Are we striving for this purity of intention, praying for it, labouring for it, seeking to bring the whole of our spiritual life up to this standard . . . that all things should be done from a love of Christ, and a consequent desire to please Him, and that we should act singly from this motive? . . . Let us habitually apply to actions which are outwardly righteous the crucial questions: 'Should I have done this, or done it with equal zeal, had no eye of man been upon me? Should I have resisted this temptation if there had been no check upon me from human law or public opinion? Should I have acted thus faithfully and conscientiously without the stimulus of human praise?'"—*Goulburn's "Pursuit of Holiness."*

"Spirit of purity and grace,
Our weakness pitying see;
Oh make our hearts Thy dwelling-place
And worthier Thee. Amen."

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JANUARY 12.

"Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."

MATT. vi. 24-34.

"NO man can serve two masters:[1] for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat,[2] and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."[3]

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[1] "This springs very clearly from the foregoing. It is a very ready thought, when we read of the treasures on earth and in heaven, to say to ourselves . . . 'Can I not have both?' This thought, then, Jesus now meets. He says, 'No, you cannot have both; you must choose where you will have your treasure, and which shall be your master. The heart must go one way or the other.'"

[2] "Is not the life more than meat?"] "This is one reason against over-anxiety as to food or clothing. God has given us that most mysterious gift, *life*, and bestowed on us these frames so fearfully and wonderfully made, and shall we not trust Him for the lesser gifts? May there not also be a reproof in these words to such (alas! no small number) as by their devotion to good fare and fine dressing would seem to believe that they lived only to eat and drink, and had bodies only to deck them with grand clothing?"

[3] "Let us take care that we do not needlessly add to our cares and troubles by bringing to-morrow's upon those of to-day. Each day's burden is sufficient, and God gives strength to bear it. But there is no promise of strength to bear to-day's and to-morrow's at once. The only way to make all these earthly burdens light is to throw into the other scale the weight of the heavenly treasures. He that ever seeks and cares for these first, finds earthly troubles strangely lessened."—*Canon How.*

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JANUARY 13.

Christian Charity.

MATT. vii. 1-6.

"JUDGE not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?[1] Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.[2] Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."

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[1] "It is better to find out one of our own faults than ten of our neighbour's." —*Parish Magazine.*

. . . . . "Judge thou thyself,
And leave the greater task to greater power;
Commit thy friends, thy brothers, yea, thy foes,
The myriads, past and present, and to come,
To Him Who sitteth on the Eternal Throne,
The Son of Man, and yet the Lord of all,
The Judge, the Priest, the Saviour, and the Friend.
Thou canst not gauge His drear abyss of wrath,
Thou canst not fathom all His boundless love,
Thou canst not track His footsteps in the deep;
And still if doubt, or grief, or hope, or fear
Perplex thee for the future or the past,
Cling to His Cross for shelter, own thy guilt,
Thy shame, thy blindness, and with veilèd face,
Low in the dust, be silent and adore."

—"*Lazarus and other Poems,*" *by E. H. Plumptre, D.D.*

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love" (Rom. xii. 10).

"Preserve me, good Lord, this day from all uncharitableness. May I 'judge not, that I be not judged.' May I have Thy favour resting upon me in all the day's duties, and Thy love sanctifying all its trials. May all my beloved friends be one with me in Jesus; one now, and one in glory everlasting. Amen."—"*The Morning Watches.*"

[2] . . . "It is as if our Lord had said, 'When you have purged your own heart from sin, then you may offer kindly counsel to others. But there must be a care, not only *from* whom, but also *to* whom such counsel is given.' A good man may be unwise in his bestowal of godly advice and holy warning. There are some no better than dogs or swine, on whom the most precious words would be thrown away. It is only to bring contempt on holy things to speak sacred truths to such."—*Canon How.*

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JANUARY 14.

Seeking and Finding.

MATT. vii. 7-14.

"ASK, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you:[1] for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father Which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him? Therefore[2] all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the Law and the Prophets. Enter ye in at the strait gate:[3] for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few[4] there be that find it."

[1] "This is indeed a glorious and most blessed promise. Would that we all had more faith to believe it. It seems that the three words 'ask,' 'seek,' 'knock' imply three degrees of prayer, increasing in eagerness and earnestness. There are two things which must not be forgotten in considering this promise. It is guarded by two conditions, one on God's side and one on ours. 1. On God's side the promise is guarded by the following verses, which teach us that it is only that which is *for our good* that God will give in answer to our prayers. 2. On our side the promise is guarded by the saying of St. James (ch. iv. 3), which shews that it is only made to true and right prayers, 'Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask *amiss*.'"

[2] "Therefore."] "Because God is so good to you. Here is the great law of acting towards another, as in verse 1 we had the law of thinking and speaking of another. This rule (alas! how rarely followed) is, to place ourselves in the other's position, and to ask ourselves, '*What should I, in that position, like done to me?*' and then to do that to the other. This world would be a different place to what it is were men to act by this golden rule."

[3] "Gate."] "What gate is this? . . . It can only mean the deliberate choice and entrance upon one or other of the two great ways in which men walk. In the one case it is the taking up the cross to follow Christ; in the other it is the following the multitude to do evil."

[4] "Few."] . . . "If 'few,' by comparison with those who walk in the broad way, find the strait gate and 'the way which leadeth unto life,' how comforting is the sure promise, 'Seek, and ye *shall find*'!"—*Canon How.*

"Jesus! from heaven to Thy servants' prayer
Give gracious heed—
Seeing for them Thou ever livest there
To intercede!"

—*Parish Magazine.*

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JANUARY 15.

True Religion is known by its Fruits.

MATT. vii. 15-27.

"BEWARE of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit: but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.[1] Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the Will of My Father Which is in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name cast out devils? and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

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[1] "Our Lord tells us that they who hear His words and do them not are like a man who builds his house upon the sand. And the warning as to the awful destiny of such comes immediately after the caution we are now considering, 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' What manner of men are we? What effect has been produced in us by the Christian privileges we have enjoyed? We are trees of the Lord's planting, planted in the heavenly vineyard of Christ. Yea, doubtless, He has often come to us seeking fruit and finding none, and has borne with us. . . . He warns us against calling Him Lord while we neglect to obey His commands. There is a sentimental religion, which spends its energies in mere thoughts and feelings about the things of heaven and the duties of earth, but brings no fruit to perfection; and there is a religion of the tongue, which is most fruitful in good words, which is very indifferent as to good works, and both of these are in the sight of God very worthless. That life which alone is well pleasing to Him is the life which abounds in deeds of truth, of righteousness, and of love. Religious sentiments and religious language are unreal and deceptive, unless they are accompanied by a religious life."—*Sermon by the Rev. W. R. Clark.*

"Thy love to Him devoutly prove
By deeds not words, and let His Love
Thy 'Shield and Buckler' be."—*Monsell.*

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JANUARY 16.

Cure of a Leper, and of the Centurion's Servant.

MATT. viii. 2-13.

"THERE came a leper and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean.[1] And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them. And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a centurion, beseeching Him, and saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented. And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard it, He marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel. And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven. But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.[2] And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the selfsame hour."

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[1] "Prompt as an echo came the answer to his faith, 'I will; be thou clean.' All Christ's miracles are revelations also. Sometimes, when the circumstances of the case required it, He delayed His answer to a sufferer's prayer. But we are never told that there was a moment's pause when a *leper* cried to Him. Leprosy was an acknowledged type of sin, and Christ would teach us that the heartfelt prayer of the sinner to be purged and cleansed is always met by instantaneous acceptance. When David, the type of all true penitents, cried with intense contrition, 'I have sinned against the Lord,' Nathan could instantly convey to him God's gracious message, 'The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not surely die.'"—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make *me* clean. Speak the word only, and Thy servant shall be healed. Lord, save me. Say unto my soul, Thou art loosed from thine infirmity."—*Bishop Andrewes' "Devotions."*

[2] . . . "The *old* kingdom, the kingdom of the Jews, the kingdom of the chosen people of God under the Law. If so awful is the end of unbelieving *Jews*, what shall be the lot of unbelieving *Christians?*"—*Canon How.*

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief" (Heb. iii. 12).

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JANUARY 17.

The Obedience and Faith required of Christ's Followers.

MATT. viii. 19-27.

"A CERTAIN Scribe came, and said unto Him, Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.[1] And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.[2] And another of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead. And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him. And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves: but He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Lord, save us: we perish. And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then He arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a great calm.[3] But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of Man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!"

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[1] "We can hardly doubt that this Scribe was moved by some selfish motive in his desire to follow Christ. Indeed, in the answers given to the three men who desired to follow Him we have a remarkable instance of the manner in which the Lord ever spoke just those words which were most needed by those whom He addressed. The Scribe probably expected some worldly advantage in following Christ, and such expectation is at once crushed by our Lord in the following words."

[2] "The foxes have holes."] "How wonderfully affecting is this homelessness of Christ! Few words in all Scripture so completely picture to us the utter loneliness and humiliation of the Everlasting Son of God! He was indeed 'despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.' . . . Days of labour, nights of prayer, love that could not but mourn, and pity that was full of grief, constant strivings with a world that would not understand, loneliness in a crowd, homelessness in the world He created—such is the picture we have of the human life of the Son of God."

[3] "A great calm."] . . . "We may most fitly apply this beautiful miracle to ourselves individually. Do storms of trouble and distress threaten to engulf us? Or does the tempest of some strong temptation rage within us? Let us awake Jesus by our earnest cries for help, and He will rebuke the tempest, and bring 'a great calm.'"—*Canon How.*

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The Demoniacs and the Paralytic Man Healed.

MATT. viii. 28-32 and ix. 2-7.

"WHEN He was come to the other side into the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way. And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time? And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding. So the devils besought Him, saying, If Thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.[1] And He said unto them, Go.[2] And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. . . . And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy, lying on a bed:[3] and Jesus seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee. And, behold, certain of the Scribes said within themselves, This Man blasphemeth. And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts? For whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith He to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house."

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[1] "Suffer us to go away into the herd of swine."] "This request fills us with wonder. We know not how the evil spirits could take possession of the soulless beasts; yet we may perhaps see in the request that love of tormenting and destroying which the spirits were forbidden any longer to exercise upon man,—that senseless rage and despair with which they would flee anywhere from the face of their conquering Judge."

[2] "Go."] "It is sometimes asked, How could our Lord permit such destruction of harmless beasts? Various reasons may be suggested. Perhaps it was that the healed man might have a visible proof of the going forth of the evil spirits from him. Indeed, the immediate effect upon the swine would afford to all the by-standers a startlingly vivid proof of the reality and personal existence of those unseen spirits, concerning which many might have been disposed to doubt."—*Canon How.*

[3] "You may do for your friend the same kind office which those interested in the poor paralytic did for him—bring him in the arms of prayer, and lay him down in his helplessness before Jesus, thus silently commending him to the pity and sympathy of Infinite Love."—*Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion."*

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JANUARY 19.

"Publicans and Sinners."

MATT. ix. 9-13.

"AS Jesus passed forth from thence, He saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose, and followed Him.[1] And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His disciples. And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto His disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?[2] But when Jesus heard that, He said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice (Hos. vi. 6):[3] for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

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[1] "Happy are they on whom God looks, that they may look on Him. Here our Lord bids one sitting in the midst of earthly gain follow Him; and he left all, rose up, and followed Him. Hast Thou looked on me, O God? Have I seen? Do I leave all else to follow Thee?"

[2] "Where should I have been if my Lord despised such? Praise Him, my soul, Who feeds with sinners, and bids them feed on Him. Do I murmur at others, or interpret what they do unkindly? Here should be my warning" (Rom. xiv. 4).—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

[3] By this quotation "our Lord would teach the Pharisees that God loves the inward spirit of mercy, which was just what they lacked when they so despised and shunned the publicans and sinners, better than the outward observance of the Law, which was just what they so greatly prided themselves in."—*Canon How.*

"Because you are quicksighted in discovering the infirmities of others, is that a sufficient reason for scorn and aversion? You who complain that men annoy you, may there not be those to whom you are an annoyance? You who are so stern in reprehension of your neighbour's fault, are you without reproach? . . . God, Who knows all, Who searches the heart, and Who has before Him the full record of your manifold iniquities, could He not confound you with a single word? And does it never happen to you to fear lest He ask why you withhold from your brother even the smallest portion of that compassion which He Who is your Master lavishes so liberally on you?"—*Fénelon.*

"Blessed are the merciful; for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. v. 7). *See* the Collect for St. Matthew's Day.

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The Presence of "The Bridegroom."

MATT. ix. 14-17.

"THEN came to Him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but Thy disciples fast not?[1] And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast. No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved."[2]

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[1] "Whether this is to be taken as a literal fact, and implies that our Lord's disciples laid aside the practice of fasting while engaged in their new labours, or whether it only implies that they did not conform to the various fasts which the Jewish traditions enjoined, does not appear. It is plain, however, that if they did fast at all, it was in such a manner as their Master had taught, that is, not to be seen of men" (Matt. vi. 17, 18).—*Canon How.*

[2] "His general meaning is, All things should be suited to the conditions of the persons, and to the circumstances of the time. As it would be absurd to put a piece of new cloth into an old garment, so it is improper that My disciples should mix mourning and rejoicing together by fasting while they have the enjoyment of My immediate Presence. And as it would be absurd to put new wine into old bottles, which will thereby be in great danger of being rent; so it would be improper to put My disciples on fasting and austerities while I am giving them the first instructions for their ministry."—*Dr. S. Clarke.*

"Humbly and devoutly used, fasting has a great blessing to open the mind and heart, to make men self-denying, and charitable in other ways, watchful to do their neighbours good, and ready to take the lowest and most inconvenient place. . . . Be sure of it, the Bridegroom, Christ, expects us to fast in the days while He is taken away out of our sight, *i.e.* in these days; only let us take care not to be as the hypocrites, seeming religious in order to be praised of men; and as surely as they miss their reward, as surely will He help us, by His mercy, to find ours."—*Keble's "Sermons for the Christian Year."*

"May we to all evil die,
Fleshly longings crucify,
Fix our hearts and thoughts on high:
We beseech Thee, hear us."

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JANUARY 21.

Health and Life Restored.

MATT. ix. 18-25.

"WHILE He spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped Him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay Thy hand upon her, and she shall live. And Jesus arose, and followed him, and so did His disciples. And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment: for she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole. But Jesus turned Him about, and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.[1] And when Jesus came into the ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise, He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn. But when the people were put forth, He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose."[2]

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[1] "When by the busy crowd of life
Too often pressed and thronged,
And in their rude and selfish strife
Both overlooked and wronged;

How sweet to know Faith's lightest touch
The watchful Saviour feels,
And healing, in reply to such
Into the suff'rer steals!

Oft through the world we smoothly go
Hiding some secret care
Our nearest, dearest, may not know
Which God alone can share.

Friends may mistake, or foes may slight,
Thyself not seem to see;
One touch of faith, however light,
Will find its way to Thee.

And Thou wilt give, when sorrow pleads,
Good comfort to the soul;
The healing it so sorely needs,
The Faith which makes it whole."—*Monsell.*

[2] "The maid arose."] "We would pause here, in the presence of this our Lord's first miracle of Resurrection, to note how He is Lord over death in all its stages. Here He calls back the spirit which has but a little while left its earthly tabernacle. The widow of Nain's son is restored to his mother as he is being carried out for burial; . . . Lazarus had been dead four days. If we add to these the rising of the bodies of the saints at the Crucifixion, which, though not at the express command of Christ, was surely by His Power, we see death in all its stages bowing before its Conqueror the Lord of Life. And in these instances, as in our Lord's own Resurrection, we have the pledge and earnest of the great resurrection at the last day, 'in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth'" (John v. 28).—*Canon How.*

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JANUARY 22.

Opening the Eyes of the Blind.

MATT. ix. 27-30, 35-38.

"WHEN Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying, and saying, Thou Son of David, have mercy on us. And when He was come into the house, the blind men came to Him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this?[1] They said unto Him, Yea, Lord. Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you. And their eyes were opened; and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See that no man know it.[2] . . . And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith He unto His disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His harvest."[3]

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[1] "Believe ye."] "Our Lord does not at once grant their request, but delays, as with the Syrophenician woman, that their faith may be made manifest."—*Canon How.*

[2] "O Lord, open the eyes of all that are in error; heal the wounds of the divided Church, that we may be one fold, under one Shepherd. Amen."—*Bishop Wilson.*

[3] "Do Thou Thy benediction give
On all who teach, on all who learn,
That so Thy Church may holier live,
And every lamp more brightly burn.

Give those who teach, pure hearts and wise;
Faith, hope, and love, all warmed by prayer;
Themselves first training for the skies,
They best will raise their people there.

Give those who learn, the willing ear,
The spirit meek, the guileless mind;
Such gifts will make the lowliest here
Far better than a kingdom find.

Oh, bless the shepherd; bless the sheep;
That guide and guided both be one—
One in the faithful watch they keep,
Until this hurrying life be done!

If thus, good Lord, Thy grace be given,
In Thee to live, in Thee to die,
Before we upward pass to heaven
We taste our immortality. Amen."

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JANUARY 23.

The Twelve Apostles sent forth.

MATT. x. 5-15.

"THESE twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles,[1] and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into an house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the Day of Judgment, than for that city."[2]

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[1] "The Gentiles."] "Why not? Was not Christ come to be 'a light to lighten the Gentiles,' as well as to be the glory of His people Israel? Yes, but not yet. Their time was not come. But this command, *not* to go to the Gentiles, was expressly withdrawn by our Lord before His Ascension, when He bade His Apostles go and 'teach *all nations*' (Matt. xxviii. 19); and when He promised them power, in the gift of the Holy Ghost, to be witnesses unto Him 'both in Jerusalem and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth' (Acts i. 8). St. Paul, too, received exactly an opposite commission to that given now to the Apostles: he was to be the Apostle of the *Gentiles*, and to minister, chiefly at least, to them" (*see* Gal. ii. 7, 8).—*Canon How.*

[2] "A glorious band, the chosen few
On whom the Spirit came;
Twelve valiant saints, their hope they knew,
And mocked the cross and flame.

They met the tyrant's brandished steel,
The lion's gory mane;
They bowed their necks the death to feel:
Who follows in their train?

They climbed the steep ascent of heaven,
Through peril, toil, and pain;
O God, to us may grace be given
To follow in their train!"

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Parting Instructions.

MATT. X. 16-23.

"BEHOLD, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father Which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come."[1]

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[1] "The coming of Christ has more than one meaning in the New Testament. Besides the last coming to judge the world, the expression also means the coming to take vengeance upon the guilty nation of the Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem, an event the horrors of which have rarely, if ever, been equalled, and which was therefore a most fit type of the final destruction of the wicked at the last great day. Our Lord urges speed upon His Apostles, inasmuch as they would not have time to visit all the cities of the land of Israel, to bear their witness to them, before that people should be overthrown, their land taken from them, and themselves driven away as exiles into all lands. This event happened A.D. 70, about forty years after these words were spoken."—*Canon How.*

"May we learn to trace in the page of history the accomplishment of God's word, and to wait in reverent but joyful expectation for that which is to be revealed; with loins girt and burning lamps, watching, like faithful servants, for the coming of a beloved Master, and thus find grace and peace in believing, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."—*Rev. G. Currey, D.D.*

"Never again your loins untie,
Nor let your torches waste and die,
Till, when the shadows thickest fall,
Ye hear your Master's midnight call!"—*Keble.*

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JANUARY 25.

Christ and His Servants.

MATT. x. 24-33.

"THE disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord.[1] It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household? Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him Which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.[2] Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My Father Which is in heaven.[3] But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny[4] before My Father Which is in heaven."

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[1] "He who keeps this saying in his heart will never complain of what he suffers, nor seek for any other way to save himself but by humility and the cross."—*Bishop Wilson.*

[2] "We have here a distinct witness to the general resurrection of the flesh. All shall rise again, though 'some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt'" (Dan. xii. 2).

[3] "This confession of Christ before men is no mere confession of the lips, no mere crying, 'Lord, Lord' (Matt. vii. 21), which is declared by Himself, in the Sermon on the Mount, to be worthless in God's sight. It is that confession which is made by a life of steadfast and consistent Christian conduct. The world will believe our actions rather than our words. What a wonderful encouragement must the gracious promise of this verse have been to the Apostles fearlessly to bear their Lord's message among men! What a wonderful encouragement to all who experience the truth of St. Paul's words, that 'all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution'"! (2 Tim. iii. 12.)—*Canon How.*

[4] "Who knows how many woes are crowded into this one sentence! It is, to say no more, a compendious expression of hell, an eternity of torments, comprised in a word. It is condemnation itself; and what is most of all, it is condemnation from the mouth of a Saviour!" (*see* the Collect for the Conversion of St. Paul.)—*South.*

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JANUARY 26.

Taking up the Cross.

MATT. x. 34-42.

"THINK not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.[1] For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.[2] And a man's foes shall be they of his own household. He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it. He that receiveth you receiveth Me,[3] and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me. He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."[4]

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[1] "Our Lord's meaning is to convey to His disciples right notions of that peace which He was to bring. It is not, He says, 'immediate temporal peace, but peace in a spiritual sense, peace in your own minds, and peace with God. Ultimately, indeed, I shall establish peace in every sense of the word; but at present, and for many years to come, I shall not bring peace, but a sword upon earth.'"

[2] "The religion which He taught would meet with most violent opposition from the world, and would expose His Apostles and disciples to the most unjust and inhuman treatment, even sometimes from their nearest relations."—*Bishop Porteous.*

[3] "In the account of the Day of Judgment given in chapter xx., we learn that we are to see Christ in His poor (Matt. xxv. 35-45); here we learn that we are to see Him in His ministers. But in both cases it is not the persons themselves, but that which they bear about them, which makes them to represent Christ. In the poor it is their poverty; in the ministers of Christ it is their message and commission."—*Canon How.*

"Christ's whole life was a cross and a martyrdom, and dost thou seek rest and joy for thyself?"—*Imitation of Christ.*

[4] "The meanest offering ye can make—
A drop of water—for love's sake,
In heaven, be sure, is stored."—*Keble.*

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JANUARY 27.

The Message to St. John the Baptist.

MATT. xi. 2-10.

"NOW when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto Him, Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached unto them. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me. And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft clothing are in kings' houses. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.[1] For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee" (Mal. iii. 1).

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[1] "A prophet."] "Now the Lord rises to the people's thoughts, for 'they counted him as a prophet' (Matt. xiv. 5). But this is not enough. He has led them up to this, bringing out their own recollections of him whom they once listened to so gladly. But they must rise higher. For he is 'more than a prophet.' What is 'more than a prophet'? The 'messenger;' the forerunner; the link between the old and the new: himself the subject of prophecy" (Mal. iii. 1.)—*Canon How.*

"Sanctity is the one idea of him impressed upon us from first to last; a most marvellous saint, a hermit from his childhood, then a preacher to a fallen people, and then a martyr."—*J. H. Newman.*

"Where is the lore the Baptist taught,
The soul unswerving and the fearless tongue?
The much-enduring wisdom, sought
By lonely prayer the haunted rocks among?
Who counts it gain
His light should wane
So the whole world to Jesus throng?"—*Keble.*

See the Collect for St. John the Baptist's Day.

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JANUARY 28.

St. John the Baptist.

MATT. xi. 11-19.

"VERILY I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.[1] And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.[2] But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned[3] unto you, and ye have not lamented. For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children."

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[1] "He that is least."] "This cannot be understood if we forget that the 'kingdom of heaven' is used by our Lord constantly to mean His heavenly kingdom set up *here on earth*, that is, the Church. Therefore what our Lord says is, that the least member of His Church is greater than John the Baptist. But what is '*least*'? Not least in holiness . . . It means least in position and in privilege. Such would be little children and the uninstructed. But how are such greater—greater, that is again, *in position and privilege*—than John the Baptist? Because they are very subjects of that kingdom which he proclaimed to be 'at hand.' They are born anew into God's own family. They have the gift of the Spirit which descended upon the Church at Pentecost. John the Baptist was the 'friend of the Bridegroom;' the Church is the Bride. He was the forerunner; Christians are the members of Christ. Again, in respect of *knowledge*, the least member of Christ's Church is more blest than John the Baptist. Dying before his Saviour, he knew less of the love and wonders of Redemption than any little child may know now."

[2] "He that hath ears."] "These words seem always to imply that there is something more to be gathered by the willing and attentive listener than appears on the surface. And so it is here. For what would such a listener gather from our Lord's discourse? Surely a very clear answer to the question 'Art Thou He that should come?' What could be plainer? The types and prophecies led up to those days. The kingdom was revealed in power. . . . They that hear aright must needs make answer, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.'"

[3] "Piped . . . mourned."] "In these words our Lord sets forth the different ways in which He and St. John the Baptist presented themselves to the perverse and obstinate Jews. The piping is the gracious invitation to joy and peace; the mourning the stern rebuke and call to repentance."—*Canon How.*

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The Call to Repentance.

MATT. xi. 20-30.

"THEN began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment than for thee. At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered unto Me of My Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."[1]

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[1] "God has promised pardon to him that repenteth, but He has not promised repentance to him that sinneth."—*St. Anselm.*

> . . . . . "Turn, oh! turn
> To Him Who seeks you, calls you. He has spread
> Through all the world the tokens of His Love,
> The showers from heaven, and fruitful years, and joy
> Of vintage and of harvest. . . . He died for you,
> For you He rose again, for you He lives,
> And pleads for you before His Father's throne.
> Easy His yoke, His burden light. To love,
> Repent, believe, is all He asks of you."
> —*"Lazarus and other Poems," by E. H. Plumptre, D.D.*

"O Lord, give us grace so to walk in Thy fear and in Thy holy ordinances, that we may at all times love Thee as a Saviour, honour Thee as a Father, reverence Thee as a Lord, and fear Thee as a Judge."—*Becon.*

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JANUARY 30.

The Sabbath Day.

MATT. xii. 1-13.

"AT that time Jesus went on the Sabbath Day through the corn; and His disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto Him, Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath Day. But He said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shew-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? Or have ye not read in the Law, how that on the Sabbath Days the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless? But I say unto you, That in this place is One greater than the temple. But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice (Hos. vi. 6), ye would not have condemned the guiltless. For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath Day.[1] And when He was departed thence, He went into their synagogue: and, behold, there was a man which had his hand withered. And they asked Him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath Days? that they might accuse Him. And He said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath Day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? How much then is a man better than a sheep? Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath Days. Then saith He to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other."

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[1] . . . "He did not come to destroy the Sabbath, any more than any other part of God's Law, but to fulfil it by giving to it its true and spiritual meaning. The 'Son of Man' has shown His lordship over the Sabbath by permitting His Church, guided doubtless by His Spirit, to change the holy day from the seventh to the first, and while still fulfilling the spirit of the fourth commandment by dedicating to God one day in seven, to exchange the Jewish Sabbath for the Christian *Lord's Day*."—*Canon How.*

"The Sabbath was expressly designed for mercy; and therefore not only might all acts of mercy be blamelessly performed thereon, but such acts would be more pleasing to God than all the insensate and self-satisfied scrupulosities which had turned a rich blessing into a burden and a snare."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Sweet day of holy calm!
With heavenly sunshine bright!
Whose very air is balm
To those who use thee right!"—*Monsell.*

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The Blasphemy of the Pharisees.

MATT. xii. 22-30.

"THEN was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This Fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.[1] And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges. But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad."[2]

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[1] "It was the hearing of the effect of the miracle upon the people, who began to wonder whether Jesus might not be the expected Messiah, which caused the Pharisees to make this wicked accusation. They did not really believe what they said, but scrupled at no blasphemy which might destroy Christ's influence with the people."—*Canon How.*

"They did not, like some later unbelievers, question the fact of our Lord's miracles; or rather they could not possibly do this whilst the miracles were being daily performed by Christ. They ascribed, therefore, His mighty works to the agency of the evil spirits, to the very power which He assaulted and subdued."

[2] "'My object is to do good; Satan's, to do evil to the souls of men. How can it be, then, that he, whose design is so opposite to Mine, should in any respect work with Me?' Here we see how watchful we ought to be against every thought, connection, or pursuit which helps us not forward in our Christian course. Either it is with Christ or against Him. If it forms no part of our duty; if it tends not to make us more holy, more heavenly-minded, more helpful to man our brother, or more serviceable to our Master Christ; then we may be sure it is against us, it is against our souls, for it is a hindrance to their salvation. . . . Let us beseech Him to cast out of ourselves all blindness of mind, all deafness, all dumbness of heart, that would render us unfit for His service; that we may thus better see His truth, hear His Word, and sound His praise, and that there may be in us no divided empire but only the Kingdom of God through Christ."—*Girdlestone.*

"O Lord, touch our hard hearts that they may feel, and open our blind eyes that we may see."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

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FEBRUARY 1.

Sins of the Tongue.

MATT. xii. 31-37.

"WHEREFORE I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.[1] Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.[2] A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle[3] word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

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[1] . . . "No one who reads our Lord's terrible words can help anxiously asking, What is this unpardonable sin? Observe, it is not merely *sin* against the Holy Ghost, it is '*blasphemy*.' . . . It is a sin which the Pharisees were at least in great danger of committing. They stood on the brink of the precipice, if they had not yet fallen over. Now they had wilfully ascribed to Satan the work of the Spirit of God. (Observe Mark iii. 30). . . . If the Holy Spirit ever ceases to strive with a man, and leaves him to a reprobate mind, it would be in the case of one seeing and knowing His Divine Power, but so hating truth and holiness as to wilfully set himself to ascribe them to the devil. In these days perhaps this dreadful sin is most nearly approached by those who from sheer hatred of goodness, or for mere party purposes, cry down and blaspheme either holy truths or holy persons."—*Canon How.*

"He who praises God with the tongue, but not with the heart, who will bear testimony to the truth without purity of soul in its obedience, lies against the truth, and blasphemes."—*Stier.*

[2] "The tongue is the truest sign of the state of the heart, which accounts for words being spoken of as of such momentous importance. The fountain within will overflow in the words of the mouth, and show of what sort it is." Read James iii. 2-12.

[3] "Idle."] "That is, light, thoughtless, careless. What a jealous watchfulness over our least words does this sentence enjoin! And if for *thoughtless* words we shall give account, how much more for *wilfully wicked* words!" —*Canon How.*

"Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; and keep the door of my lips" (Ps. cxli. 3).

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The Danger of trifling with "the Truth."

MATT. xii. 38-45.

"CERTAIN of the Scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from Thee. But He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign[1] be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.[2] Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation."

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[1] "No sign."] "No special sign, no new miracle, no wonder in the heavens, to prove what there was sufficient proof of already. Possibly no such sign would have really convinced the obstinate hearts of those who asked for it, and it might have been said of them, 'If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.' *That* sign, however, they were to have given them, as is said in the next verse."

[2] This parable "should teach us that when we cast forth some crying sin, we leave ourselves in great danger of falling into even worse, if we are not careful to see that our hearts are filled with God's Holy Spirit. Thus a drunkard may reform, and cast forth, with pain and difficulty, the demon of his drunkenness; but if he leave his soul 'empty,' and 'garnished' only with an outward decency of conduct, not only will his old enemy be likely to return with new power, but he is in danger of being taken possession of by new enemies, such as pride, self-righteousness, hypocrisy, or some other form of evil, which lurked in him before unsuspected."—*Canon How.*

"Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (1 Cor. x. 12).

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FEBRUARY 3.

Christ's Mother and Brethren.

MATT. xii. 46-50, and xiii. 2-9.

"WHILE He yet talked to the people, behold, His mother and His brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him. Then one said unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee. But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is My mother? and who are My brethren? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My Father Which is in heaven, the same is My brother, and sister, and mother.[1] . . . And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore. And He spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower[2] went forth to sow; and when he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the fowls came and devoured them up. Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: and when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: but other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear."

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[1] . . . "We must observe that our Lord is by no means drawing a *contrast* between His Mother and brethren on the one side, and those who do the will of His Father on the other, as though the former were shut out from the blessing of the latter. There can be no doubt that His own blessed Mother possessed the double blessedness, firstly of the closest earthly relationship, and secondly of the nearest heavenly union, through obedience to the will of His Father in heaven."—*Canon How.*

"This promise is not to a few favoured ones, but to all who will do His will quietly, each in his own place. There is not one here, nor in any other Christian congregation, to whom this hope is not held out, that he may be accounted the brother, sister, or mother of Christ. Blessed hope! God grant that we may none of us wilfully throw it away."—*Keble's "Sermons for the Christian Year."*

[2] "A sower."] "Christ's entrance into the world was a going forth to sow: the Word of the kingdom, which Word He first proclaimed, was His seed; the hearts of men His soil. Others were only able to sow because He had sown first; they did but carry on the work which He had begun."—*Trench "On the Parables."*

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The Reason for speaking in Parables.

MATT. xiii. 10-17.

"THE disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speakest Thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given. For whosoever hath,[1] to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath. Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand. And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people's heart is waxed gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should understand with their heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them (Isa. vi. 9, 10). But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men[2] have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."[3]

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[1] "For whosoever hath."] "The disciples had won the privilege of further light by accepting and using that which had been offered them. The others had forfeited the privilege by refusing it. . . . It was a judgment—a punishment—a taking away from those who had not, because they *would not* have—a locking up of the well to those who refused to taste of the waters of life. It was no arbitrary rejection of those "without." They had rejected themselves, and this was only their deserved punishment. Jesus would have saved them, had they been willing; but they had refused His repeated invitation, and now to reveal to them the blessed truths of His kingdom would only be to cast 'pearls before swine.'"

[2] "Many prophets and righteous men."] "This verse is yet more true of *us;* for *our* knowledge of the 'mysteries of the kingdom' is greater than that which even the most favoured Apostles at this time possessed. Let us remember that 'unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required'" (Luke xii. 48).—*Canon How.*

[3] "Let *us*, then, be ever on our guard, lest we seeing, see not, or hearing, hear not. Let us be aware, that on our own attention and willingness, depends the degree of profit we shall derive from God's Word. Let us apply all we see and hear to the case of our own conscience, and the nourishment of our souls."—*Girdlestone.*

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Parable of the Sower explained.

MATT. xiii. 18-23.

"HEAR ye therefore the parable of the sower. When any one heareth the Word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way-side.[1] But he that received the seed into stony places,[2] the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it: yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns[3] is he that heareth the Word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the Word, and he becometh unfruitful. But he that received seed into the good ground[4] is he that heareth the Word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty."[5]

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[1] "The wayside."] "The case of those whose minds are open to every vain and foolish thought, never collected in themselves, never fixed for an hour on God. These Satan readily gains. Lord, fence him out of my soul, and make me fruitful" (Isa. v. 2-5).

[2] "Stony places."] "Hearts already hardened by evil habits; having no root, no real depth of inward religion; lacking moisture (Luke); dry and barren in devotion and pious affections. What there is lies on the surface. Such an one begins much, perfects nothing—soon withers away. Am I such?" (2 Tim. iii. 7.)

[3] "Thorns."] "The cares, and pleasures, and useless employments of the world. These fill the mind; prayer is distracted, the truth is stifled, the Spirit quenched, the soul lost! Learn self-restraint betimes."

[4] "Good ground."] "This comes of hearing attentively, reflecting carefully, examining diligently, practising consistently, patiently, and constantly. Be not content with the lowest attainments; strive for the hundred-fold" (Ps. cxxvi. 6, 7).—*"Daily Steps towards Heaven."*

[5] "We must take care to obey the Word, and do the works which the Word teaches, and not be content with hearing and talking only, as if men could be saved without holy acting and doing. This would be terrible self-deceit. Hearing, feeling, and believing, are very precious when they lead to holy living; but otherwise they are of no good, or rather are of much evil, for they only aggravate guilt."—*Bishop Moberly.*

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FEBRUARY 6.

The Tares—the Mustard Seed—the Leaven.

MATT. xiii. 24-33.

"ANOTHER parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field; but while men slept,[1] his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up,[2] and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest:[3] and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn. Another parable put He forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown,[4] it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof. Another parable spake He unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened."[5]

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[1] "While men slept."] "Among the best, the world the flesh and the devil strive to sow the seeds of evil and corruption. When is this evil done? While men sleep! When I am not watching is the time of danger."

[2] "When the blade was sprung up."] "At first the mischief could not be seen. We grow careless, time passes on, and the evil is seen! Our good fruit is corrupted with evil motives. We have let in the enemy, *self*, and, it may be, evil companions, etc. Is this so with me?"

[3] "Let both grow together until the harvest."] "See the patience of God, Who bears with all our deficiencies, looking to gather in good fruit at last; then, surely, no evil will stand. Now is the time of amendment. Am I using it?" (Matt. vii. 19.)

[4] "But when it is grown."] "The truths of the Gospel, at first sown in the heart, are unseen; but if really there, they grow on and on till they bring forth much fruit, acceptable to God in Christ. Men see it—feel it. Has this been my course? Am I still advancing?" (2 Pet. i. 5-9).—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

[5] "The end of Divine knowledge is the fruit of a holy life. Without such result it simply puffs us up" (1 Cor. viii. 1).—*Rev. A. W. Thorold.*

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FEBRUARY 7.

The Harvest—the Hidden Treasure—the Pearls.

MATT. xiii. 36-46.

"THEN Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and His disciples came unto Him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man; the field is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one; the enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of Man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.[1] Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it."[2]

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[1] "See the whole of chap. xxv., and read the description of the world's harvest in Rev. xiv. 14-16."—*Canon How.*

"Nor vainly of Thy Word we ask
A lesson from the reaper's task:
So shall Thine angels issue forth;
The tares be burnt; the just of earth,
To wind and storm exposed no more,
Be gathered to their Father's store."

[2] "'The Hidden Treasure' and 'The Pearls' set forth the priceless value of true religion to the finder of it. Being spoken to those who had already found it, they seem intended to show them how well and wisely they had sacrificed, and would sacrifice, everything to secure this one possession (*see* Phil. iii. 8). . . . Some are brought to the discovery of the hidden treasure by unlooked-for means; such as a sickness or a sorrow, or words which are brought home to the heart with life and power by the Spirit of God. Others, again, make long search after religion, and only after patient toil, and many disappointments, find at last the pearl of great price. Then, whichever way it is found, all is gladly parted with to secure the inestimable treasure."—*Canon How.*

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FEBRUARY 8.

The Draw-net.

MATT. xiii. 47-58.

"AGAIN, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.[1] So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth,[2] and sever the wicked from among the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto Him, Yea, Lord.[3] Then said He unto them, Therefore every Scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old. And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these parables, He departed thence. And when He was come into His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this Man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's Son? is not His mother called Mary? and His brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this Man all these things? And they were offended in Him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour,[4] save in his own country and in his own house.[5] And He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief."[6]

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[1] "'The Tares' taught the mingling of evil and good in the present kingdom of Christ; 'the Draw-net' teaches their final separation."

[2] "The angels shall come forth."] "We read that Christ shall come with all the holy Angels (*see* Matt. xxv. 31; Mark viii. 38; Luke ix. 26; 2 Thess. i. 7). No doubt these holy beings, at present hidden from our eyes, will then 'come forth' *visibly* to execute God's judgments."

[3] "Yea, Lord."] "The disciples had no doubt understood our Lord's parables as far as they were then capable. Probably, however, their understanding of them was very imperfect to what it was after they had received the gift of the Holy Ghost."

[4] "A prophet is not without honour."] "These words are a proverb, expressing a common truth. Men constantly think lightly of that with which they are familiar. The blessings at our doors are those we value least."

[5] "It is His own pathetic lament in the Psalms that 'His kinsmen stood afar off'" (Ps. xxxviii. 11).—*Is. Williams.*

[6] "So complete a hindrance is unbelief to the reception of God's blessings."—*Canon How.*

"Make us, O Lord, to draw near to Thee, and to be willing hearers and doers of Thy Word!"

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FEBRUARY 9.

The Feeding of the Five Thousand.

MATT. xiv. 14-21.

"AND Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick. And when it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. And they say unto Him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes. He said, Bring them hither to Me. And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full. And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children."[1]

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[1] "This miracle is recorded, and the only one recorded, by all the four Evangelists (Mark vi. 30-34; Luke ix. 10-17; John vi. 1-13). It must therefore be of singular importance. The different accounts should be read together, and it can never be studied properly apart from the wonderful discourse which follows it in John vi."—*Canon How.*

"Daily, O Lord, our prayers be said,
As Thou hast taught, for daily bread;
But not alone our bodies feed,
Supply our fainting spirits' need:
O Bread of Life, from day to day,
Be Thou their Comfort, Food, and Stay!"

"They that would have eternal life must partake of the Bread of Heaven; or—to use the other and deeper image—must eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man. They *must feed on Him in their hearts by faith.*"—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"He walks as in the Presence of God that converses with Him in frequent prayer and frequent Communion, that runs to Him in all his necessities, that asks counsel of Him in all his doubtings, that opens all his wants to Him, that weeps before Him for his sins, that asks remedy and support for his weakness, that fears Him as a Judge, reverences Him as a Lord, obeys Him as a Father, and loves Him as a Patron."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

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FEBRUARY 10.

The Walking on the Sea.

MATT. xiv. 23-32.

"WHEN He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone. But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary. And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear. But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. And Peter answered Him and said, Lord, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water. And He said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and, beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. And immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?[1] And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased."

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[1] "So then if, like Peter, we fix our eyes on Jesus, we too may walk triumphantly over the swelling waves of disbelief, and unterrified amid the rising winds of doubt; but if we turn our eyes from Him in Whom we have believed—if, as it is so easy to do, and as we are so much tempted to do, we look rather at the power and fury of those terrible destructive elements, than at Him Who can help and save in them, we too shall inevitably sink. Oh! if we feel, often and often, that the waterfloods threaten to drown us, and the deep to swallow up the tossed vessel of our Church and Faith, may it again and again be granted us to hear amid the storm and the darkness, and the voices prophesying war, those two sweetest of the Saviour's utterances—'Fear not. Only believe;' 'It is I; be not afraid.'"—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"It has been well said that Christ's words are not 'Wherefore didst thou *come?*' The Apostle was right in stepping on the water, for Christ had said 'Come.' Wherever He invites or commands us to go, there it is plain we should not hesitate to go. It is want of faith, making us fear when we are following His commands, and when He is near us, which Jesus rebukes."—*Canon How.*

"Heavenly Father, give me grace to trust in Thee at all times. . . . Grant that I may be able to feel assured that my Saviour is interceding for me, and that in His own good time He will appear for my help and deliverance."—*"Able to Save."*

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FEBRUARY 11.

The Prophecy of Esaias.

MATT. XV. 1-9.

"THEN came to Jesus Scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do Thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death (Exod. xx. 12, and xxi. 17). But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; and honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me.[1] But in vain they do worship Me,[2] teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"[3] (Isa. xxix. 13).

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[1] "O my Lord! am not I of the number of those falsely devout who honour Thee with their lips, but their heart is far from Thee? How often have worldly thoughts accompanied the worship which I have been offering Thee! How often has my heart been colder than ice whilst my lips were praising Thee!"—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

"Make it a law to yourself to meditate before you pray, as also to make certain pauses, to see whether your heart go along with your lips."—*Bishop Wilson.*

[2] "In vain they do worship Me."] "They who pretend to honour God, but yet dishonour His Word by preferring to it the doctrines and commandments of men, worship God in vain. They are hypocrites, professing what they do not feel or act up to; for if they really honoured God, they would certainly honour His Word too."—*Canon How.*

[3] "Give me grace to hear Thy Holy Word with reverence and respect becoming the gracious manifestation of Thy will to men, submitting my understanding and will to Thine."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Have you been reverent in the worship of God Himself? (*see* Eccles. v. 1, 2.) Do you ever say your private prayers in a slovenly way? . . . or kneeling down hastily, having your mind full of other things, and without trying to sober your thoughts, and turn them to God? . . . Have you prayed without caring whether God gave what you prayed for or not?"—"*Ways of Overcoming Temptation,*" *by the Rev. G. Boodle.*

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FEBRUARY 12.

"The Things which defile a Man."

MATT. XV. 10-20.

"AND He called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Then came His disciples, and said unto Him, Knowest Thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But He answered and said, Every plant, which My Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. Then answered Peter, and said unto Him, Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."[1]

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[1] "Are your words the pure truth of God, full of pure love to your neighbour, useful for his edification; salt, and yet full of peace? If you learn carefully to mark the impropriety of your words, you will learn to detect it also in many of your actions. . . . That which proceedeth out of the mouth, and similarly what the eyes and ears, the hands and feet, do—all comes from the *heart*. Cleanse your hands and purify your hearts (James iv. 8). Thus alone we cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness."—*Stier*.

"Thy thoughts are not only thoughts; they give their sound without; they go for words and actions too in the sight of God."—*Bishop King*.

"O Lord, prevent Thou with Thy saving grace all vain thoughts and evil imaginations."

"Cleanse Thou me from my secret faults" (Ps. xix. 12).

"I acknowledge, O Jesus, the Almighty power of Thy grace to heal all the disorders of my soul: oh, deal with me according to the multitude of Thy mercies, and heal my soul of its sad disorders!"—*Bishop Wilson*.

"Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips, and from a deceitful tongue" (Ps. cxx. 2).

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Prov. iv. 23).

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FEBRUARY 13.

The Faith of the "Woman of Canaan."

MATT. xv. 21-28.

"THEN Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But He answered her not a word.[1] And His disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me. But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour."[2]

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[1] "It is said, 'He *answered* not a word,' but it is not said, He *heard* not a word. These two differ much. Christ often heareth when He doth not answer, and speaks thus: 'Pray on, go on and cry, for the Lord holdeth His door fast bolted—not to keep you out, but that you may knock and knock.'"—*Rutherford.*

[2] "Long and earnestly she pleaded,
Grief and faith her spirit stirred,
Mercy for her child she needed,
But He answered not a word.

Still she prayed and drew the nearer,
Sorrow made her spirit bold,
For she felt her Lord would hear her
Though all other hearts were cold.

He Who seemed so dull to hear her
Answered not through very love,
Stood aloof to draw her nearer,
Moved not, that her soul might move.

All that shade and seeming coldness
Hanging o'er His gentle face,
He assumed to stir her 'boldness'
Coming to the 'throne of grace.'

Thus, my soul, in all thy pleadings
Let thy faith unwearied be;
What at first seem lets are leadings
Sent to help, not hinder thee.

Trust the promises which never
Fail to answer earnest prayer;
Clouds may rise, but Love is ever
Shining bright behind them there.

They who can with 'crumbs' content them,
Thankful on the least to live,
Soon shall have all blessings sent them
Which the Lord of Life can give."—*Monsell.*

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FEBRUARY 14.

Feeding the Four Thousand.

MATT. xv. 32-38.

"THEN Jesus called His disciples unto Him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.[1] And His disciples say unto Him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?[2] And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to His disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children."[3]

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[1] "Like as a father pitieth his own children, even so is the Lord merciful unto them that fear Him" (Ps. ciii. 13).

[2] "At first it creates some surprise that the Apostles, with that other miracle fresh in their memories, should now have been equally at a loss how the multitude should be fed as they were before. Yet this surprise rises out of our ignorance of man's heart, of our own heart, and of the deep root of unbelief which is there. It is evermore thus in times of difficulty and distress. All former deliverances are in danger of being forgotten; the mighty interpositions of God's Hand in former passages of men's lives fall out of their memories. Each new difficulty appears insurmountable, as one from which there is no extrication; at each recurring necessity it seems as though the wonders of God's grace are exhausted, and have come to an end. . . . It is only the man of a full-formed faith, a faith such as Apostles themselves at this time had not, who argues from the past to the future, and truly derives confidence from God's former dealings of faithfulness and love."—*Archbishop Trench.*

[3] "Commit yourself to Him; cast your care upon Him, and He will care for you."—*Bradford.*

"O Lord, how happy should we be
If we could cast our care on Thee,
If we from self could rest;
And feel at heart that One above,
In perfect wisdom, perfect love,
Is working for the best!"

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Demanding "a Sign from Heaven."

MATT. xvi. 1-4.

"THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees,[1] came, and tempting desired Him that He would show them a sign from heaven. He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, It will be fair weather: for the sky is red. And in the morning, It will be foul weather to-day: for the sky is red and lowring. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times? A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas. And He left them, and departed."[2]

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[1] "The Pharisees also, with the Sadducees."] "This passage must be compared with the former similar one (*see* Matt. xii. 38-42) in which the *Scribes* and Pharisees sought for a sign. Here we behold a new friendship. The Pharisees and the Sadducees, bitterest opponents as they were, unite together to oppose Christ. So do we often see unprincipled men of most opposite views and opinions banded together in their enmity to religion. Observe how St. Paul refers to the frequent demanding of a sign from our Lord" (1 Cor. i. 22).—*Canon How.*

[2] "The descent of the Holy Spirit on Him at His Baptism, and the voice of the Father declaring Him to be His Beloved Son, were *signs from heaven;* yet the Pharisees and Sadducees required some further evidence. . . . Having therefore again reproved them as a wicked and adulterous generation, and refused them any other sign but that of Jonas, the type of His death and resurrection, He left them to their perverseness."—*Bishop Hall.*

"Plead not reason's poor pretence,
Trust what God hath told thee;
Lean not on thine erring sense,
When His arms enfold thee.

Thou wouldst with thine eyes behold,
What thy soul desireth;
Thou wouldst to thine ears have told,
What thy sense requireth.

Faith, inured to harder tasks,
In submission kneeleth,
Nor, with doubting Thomas, asks
More than God revealeth.

Watch above, and wait below,
While thy soul receiveth
That high blessing, he shall know,
Who seeing not believeth."

—*Monsell.*

"How apt are we to exercise ourselves in matters too high for us; not content with knowing that our Father *wills* it, but presumptuously seeking to know *how* it is, and *why* it is!"—"*The Words of Jesus.*"

"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter" (John xiii. 7).

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The Leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

MATT. xvi. 5-12.

"WHEN His disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread. Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.[1] Which when Jesus perceived, He said unto them, O ye of little faith,[2] why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine[3] of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees."

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[1] "How slow the disciples were to understand the spirituality of their Master's teaching! . . . They imagined our Lord would scruple to eat bread prepared by either Pharisees or Sadducees, as though it would pollute or defile. How little could they have entered into the truth so lately taught them, that 'not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man.'"

[2] "O ye of little faith."] "Faith is the eye of the soul, the eye which looks upon 'the things which are not seen,' . . . that which makes them as clear to us as the bodily eye makes the things of sight. It was exactly such a spiritual eye which the disciples lacked when they thought their Master spoke of *outward* leaven and *outward* bread. This was *sight*, not faith; therefore the rebuke."

[3] "Doctrine."] "There seems no need to interpret this of 'hypocrisy,' though this is, on another occasion (Luke xii. 1), declared to be the 'leaven of the Pharisees.' Indeed, 'hypocrisy' is not a 'doctrine' at all. The doctrine of the Pharisees was a self-righteous strictness of conduct, and a hypocritical care for outward observances. The doctrine of the Sadducees was a want of belief in all that they could not plainly see—unbelief leading to a worldly life."—*Canon How.*

"Only let us believe, and our joy shall be full. Let us honour God by trusting Him entirely. Let us be as willing to receive as He is willing to bestow. . . . Whatever our needs, He can supply them, for He is God; He will supply them, for He is Love."—*Rev. W. Thorold's "Presence of Christ."*

"Grant, O God, that my faith in Thy sight may never be reproved."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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The Confession of St. Peter.

MATT. xvi. 13-19.

"WHEN Jesus came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi, He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say that Thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the Prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father Which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."[1]

[1] "Never did even the lips of Jesus utter more memorable words. It was His own testimony of Himself. It was the promise that they who can acknowledge it are blessed. It was the revealed fact that they only *can* acknowledge it who are led thereto by the Spirit of God. It told mankind for ever that not by earthly criticisms, but only by heavenly grace, can the full knowledge of that truth be obtained. It was the laying of the corner-stone of the Church of Christ, and the earliest occasion on which was uttered that memorable word, thereafter to be so intimately blended with the history of the world. . . . To Peter himself the great promise was remarkably fulfilled. It was he who converted on the day of Pentecost the first great body of Jews who adopted the Christian faith; it was he who admitted the earliest Gentile into the full privileges of Christian fellowship."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Inward faith in the heart puts man into the state of righteousness before God, and outward, lifelong confession of that faith with the mouth, made in all sincerity and truth, carries on that state of righteousness to the end, that is, eternal salvation" (*see* Rom. x. 10).—*Bishop Moberly.*

"'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,' is the Church's foundation on which she rests.

"'Thou art the King of Glory, O Christ!' is the Church's constant source of edification.

"May *we* all know experimentally and increasingly that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the Living God."—*Sermon by the Rev. G. Venables.*

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FEBRUARY 18.

The Cross must be Borne.

MATT. xvi. 21-28.

"FROM that time forth began Jesus to show unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.[1] Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, Lord: this shall not be unto Thee. But He turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan:[2] thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men. Then said Jesus unto His disciples, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man[3] shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

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[1] "The Apostles having been strengthened by the confession of their Lord's Godhead made in their name by St. Peter, are now better prepared to bear the prophecy of His sufferings, of which from this time He spoke clearly and often. This was about a year before the fulfilment of the words."

[2] "Get thee behind Me, Satan."] "The very words Jesus had spoken to the devil in the wilderness! And now they are spoken to him on whom He had but just bestowed such blessings! Yet it is not so much the Apostle himself who is addressed in these startling words as Satan, whom Jesus discerns, as it were, lurking behind the Apostle, and making use of him to suggest the temptation so hard to the human nature to endure. How severe that temptation was we may gather from our Lord's own words (John xii. 27), as well as from His prayer in the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. xxvi. 39).—It is worth noticing that the temptation which St. Peter uttered, and that which the devil put before our Lord in the wilderness, and which drew from Him the same rebuke, were really the same temptation—namely, to take *the crown without the cross*."

[3] "The Son of Man."] "Though this is the usual title by which our Lord speaks of Himself, yet here it has a more than common fitness, for it is specially *as man* that He will judge, because it is *as man* that He knows our infirmities" (*see* John v. 27).—*Canon How.*

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FEBRUARY 19.

The Transfiguration.

MATT. xvii. 1-9.

"AFTER six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, and was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him.[1] Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles;[2] one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a Voice out of the cloud which said, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid. And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision[3] to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead."

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[1] "The two who appeared to Him were the representatives of the Law and the Prophets; both had been removed from this world in a mysterious manner; . . . both, like the greater One with Whom they spoke, had endured that supernatural fast of forty days and nights; both had been on the holy mount in the visions of God. And now they came, solemnly to consign into His hands, once and for all, in a symbolical and glorious representation, their delegated and expiring power."—*Alford.*

[2] "Let us make here three tabernacles."] "Is not this the expression of a very common feeling in moments of great spiritual excitement and joy? Is it not as much as to say, 'Oh that it were possible never to lose the bliss and glory of this hour, never to cease to dwell in the very Presence of my glorified Lord! Oh that I could leave all earthly things, and spend my days in holy adoration among God's saints!' But it cannot be. We must descend from the mount to toils and labours, and little daily duties and trials and temptations. Our religion is a work, not a rapture."

[3] "The word 'vision' must not mislead us. It simply means something *seen*, and in no way denies the *reality* of that which was seen. But why were the chosen three to keep the vision secret till after the Resurrection? We cannot be sure. It may have been to deepen the impression in their own hearts; or it may have been that the rest of the disciples were not able to receive it. . . . The Resurrection of our Lord, and the wonders attending it, would open the minds of His disciples to the reception of many truths which would not have been understood before."—*Canon How.*

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FEBRUARY 20.

Unbelief.

MATT. xvii. 10-21.

"AND His disciples asked Him, saying, Why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed: likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist. And when they were come to the multitude, there came to Him a certain man, kneeling down to Him, and saying, Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed: for ofttimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him. Then Jesus answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to Me. And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour. Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out? And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief:[1] for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place, and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting."[2]

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[1] "Because of your unbelief."] "At the bottom of the failure of the disciples to cast out the devil lay that which is at the bottom of all failure in spiritual things—unbelief. The disciples lacked a deep undoubting faith in their Lord's power, and in their own as derived from Him. Yet they had at other times cast out devils. Thus we see that their faith wavered and flickered, as it were. It was not steadfast, not always ready, not always unshaken. So St. Peter's faith failed him on the water" (Matt. xiv. 30, 31; *see* James i. 6).—*Canon How.*

[2] "Fasting."] "Necessary to bring our hearts to a penitent, holy, and devout temper, and to perform the vows that are upon us. By fasting, by alms, and by prayers, we dedicate our bodies, goods, and souls to God in a particular manner."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"O Lord, increase my faith! 'Help Thou mine unbelief!'"

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FEBRUARY 21.

The Foreknowledge of Christ.

MATT. xvii. 22-27.

"AND while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.[1] And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute? He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? Peter saith unto Him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend[2] them, go thou to the sea,[3] and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for Me and thee."[4]

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[1] "They were exceeding sorry."] "It seems strange to us, looking on our Lord's life and words in the light streaming back upon them from the Cross, to see how slow the Apostles themselves were to understand the oft-repeated prophecies of His approaching Death and Resurrection. The words here seem very plain, yet they understood them not, and could only grieve for what seemed to them so terrible, being afraid to ask Him for any further explanation after what had occurred last time, when St. Peter ventured to 'rebuke' Him."—*Canon How.*

[2] "Lest we should offend."] "That is, give them an opportunity of saying that 'I despise the temple and its services, and teach My disciples to do so.' By this example Christ teaches us to avoid the scandal and suspicions of men, however groundless they may be."—*Dr. Whitby.*

[3] "Go thou to the sea."] "Our Lord has just *claimed* to be the Son of God; He now *proves* that He is so by His miraculous foreknowledge and power. As in the miraculous draughts of fishes, even the creatures of the sea recognise and obey the will of their Creator."—*Canon How.*

[4] "'His eyes are on every place!' on rolling planets and tiny atoms, on the bright seraph and the lowly worm;—roaming in searching scrutiny through the tracts of immensity, and reading the occult and hidden page of my heart! 'All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do.'"—"*The Night Watches.*"

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FEBRUARY 22.

"Christ's Little Ones."

MATT. xviii. 1-14.

"AT the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children,[1] ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in My Name receiveth Me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh![2] Wherefore, if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast them from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell-fire. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father Which is in heaven. For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, He rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father Which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish."

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[1] "Except ye be converted, and become as little children."] "Unless we turn back from our selfishness, from our vanity, from our duplicity, and become as one of them, there is no entrance for us there."—*Alford.*

"'Unless ye believe,' saith the prophet, 'ye cannot understand;' unless ye be humble as children, ye not only *will* not, but ye *cannot* believe. Of such, therefore, is the kingdom of heaven."—*S. T. Coleridge.*

[2] "There are no stumblingblocks so dangerous as the sins of professing Christians."—*Canon How.*

"O God, make clean our hearts within us, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from us!"

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FEBRUARY 23.

The Link between Heaven and Earth.

MATT. xviii. 15-20.

"MOREOVER if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.[1] But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father Which is in heaven. For[2] where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

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[1] *See* Gal. vi. 1.

"Is it thy duty and thy place
To speak in warning tone?
In pity to a mortal's sin
Tell him his fault alone.
It were not meet another eye should see
The tear that falls between his God and thee."
—"*Cathedral Rhymes.*"

[2] "For."] "There is great significance in the 'For.' Jesus would have us to understand that it is His Presence in the midst of the two or three gathered together in His Name which lends all the efficacy to their petitions. The High Priest, He would say, is in the midst of the worshippers, whose functions of atonement and intercession are the alone prevailing cause of the acceptance of their prayers."—*Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion."*

"This grace is ours; who asks in Thy great Name
May ask for all, and with assurance claim
The purchased pardon to believers given;
The seal of mercy, and the hope of heaven."—*Perronet.*

. . . "Before we address ourselves to Common Prayer, we should mutually, priest and people, ask the Lord to be with us, to be in the midst of us, making His Presence felt and realized, and touching our spirits with that faith, and hope, and love which alone can secure a result to our prayers."—*Goulburn's "Child Samuel."*

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FEBRUARY 24.

The Unmerciful Servant.

MATT. xviii. 21-35.

"THEN came Peter to Him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven. Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants. And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents. But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made. The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt. But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid his hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done. Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him. So likewise shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."[1]

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[1] "The Lord concludes with a word of earnest warning: 'So likewise shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you,' etc. 'So'—with the same rigour; such treasures of wrath, as well as such treasures of grace are with Him: He Who could so greatly forgive can also so greatly punish."—*Trench "On the Parables."*

"Then, my soul! be this thy law,
For each breath which thou dost draw
Of God's mercy full and free,
Let thy love outbreathèd be;
And, as with each Heav'n-sent gale
Thou forgiveness dost inhale,
Let thy heart breathe out again,
Pardon to thy fellow-men."—*Monsell.*

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FEBRUARY 25.

The Sacredness of Marriage.

MATT. xix. 3-12.

"THE Pharisees also came unto Him, tempting Him, and saying unto Him, Is it lawful[1] for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He Which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto Him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. His disciples say unto Him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But He said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it."[2]

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[1] "Is it lawful?"] "The Jews were much divided as to what causes rendered divorce lawful. They come to Christ, however, not to have their difficulties solved, but 'tempting Him,' hoping to induce Him to give an opinion which they could show to be contrary to the law of Moses. Probably they knew that He had already taught the sacredness of marriage with great strictness, and were bent upon holding a less strict view."—*Canon How.*

[2] "God will require your vows of you in the Day of Judgment."—"*Ways of Overcoming Temptation.*"

"Whether we have or have not the blessings of the married state, whether liberty or bondage be our lot, whether our portion here be plenteousness of tears or abundance of joy, whether our possessions be large or small, whether our interest in the world much or little, . . . the hour is at hand when it will chiefly be inquired what use we have made of what we had, whether we have cared mainly for treasure in heaven, whether we have reserved the best of our affections for our Lord. This is the condition we are in any case to aim at. This is the change we must labour for: . . . freedom from sin, devotion to our Lord, and to have the soul so knit together unto Him in spiritual marriage as to be one with Him, and He one with us."—*Girdlestone.*

"May my whole spirit, and soul, and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen."

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FEBRUARY 26.

The Way of Eternal Life.

MATT. xix. 13-22.

"THEN were there brought unto Him little children, that He should put His hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.[1] And He laid His hands on them, and departed thence. And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good?[2] there is none good but One, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto Him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow Me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."[3]

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[1] "Of such is the kingdom of heaven."] "Not only of these who by their infancy cannot sin, but of 'such' who by grace do not—the humble, the meek, the gentle, the teachable, the obedient. Am I such?" (1 Cor. xiv. 20; 1 John iii. 2).—*"Daily Steps towards Heaven."*

[2] "Why callest thou Me good?"] . . . "It need scarcely be said that Jesus here by no means refuses to Himself the title of 'good.' So far from it, He might, had it been His pleasure to reveal Himself more openly, have said, 'There is none good but One, that is, God: nevertheless thou saidst well, for I and My Father are One.' But the ruler did not know Jesus *as God;* he only used the word 'good' of One Whom he believed to be a wise and godly *man.* So that our Lord might well ask him to think of the real sense of the word he had used."—*Canon How.*

[3] We must not "suppose that our Lord recommends the renunciation of property as *a work of extraordinary merit, which, when once done, will secure eternal life to the doer of it.* . . . It is not a mere dropping of the goods which Christ requires, but a dropping of these in order to embrace God,—God's kingdom, God's righteousness, God's will. . . . We must maintain towards the blessings and comforts of this life such an attitude of mind as would make us ready to strip ourselves bare of them, should God require us to do so."—*Goulburn's "Pursuit of Holiness."*

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FEBRUARY 27.

Future Rewards.

MATT. xix. 23-30.

"THEN said Jesus unto His disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven. And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. When His disciples heard it, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But Jesus beheld them, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible. Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed Me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.[1] And every one[2] that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."[3]

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[1] "Twelve thrones, judging."] "To share Christ's throne implies great honour and glory (*see* Rev. iii. 21). . . . The thrones imply the first rank of glory. By 'judging' is here meant ruling. There are ranks and dignities in heaven, and among these the Twelve will hold a high place, being, possibly, the heads over twelve great divisions of the spiritual Israel, the whole multitude of the redeemed being thus divided like the literal Israel of old. We must remember that one throne was lost by him who was first called to it, and will be filled by another" (*see* Acts i. 25, 26).

[2] "Every one."] "Observe, our Lord would teach His Apostles not to suppose that they alone should reach a high place in the kingdom of heaven. It is '*every one*' who has forsaken the blessings of earth for Christ's sake and '*the Gospel's*' (Mark)—'for the kingdom of God's sake' (Luke)—who shall receive a rich reward here and eternal life hereafter."

[3] "But many."] . . . "Those who esteem themselves first in God's favour may find others, who seemed to them last, placed above themselves. It is to enforce this latter truth that the following parable is spoken."—*Canon How.*

"Give me grace, O Lord, to be clothed with humility, and in lowliness of mind to esteem others better than myself."

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FEBRUARY 28.

The Labourers in the Vineyard.

MATT. xx. 1-16.

"FOR[1] the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard. And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard. And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace, and said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise. And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive. So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them their hire, beginning from the last unto the first. And when they came that were hired about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny. And when they had received it, they murmured against the goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day. But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen."[2]

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[1] "For."] "This word closely connects this parable with the conversation at the close of the last chapter; and as the closing words of that conversation are repeated at the end of the parable, we must look to them for a key to its general meaning. Its great object, then, is to show how the first may become last, by a proud or grudging spirit, and how the last may become first by God's grace and mercy."—*Canon How.*

[2] *See* James v. 9. "Do not grumble or repine, as though the favours of God were unequally or unduly divided, as though persons apparently of less claim or desert than yourselves received larger gifts or better ones from God's goodness. . . . For such grumbling is a sort of judging of your neighbour's claims and deserts, of which you know nothing. And by so judging you lay yourselves open to judgment, according to our Lord's words in Matt. vi. 1." —*Bishop Moberly.*

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MARCH 1.

The Cross must precede the Crown.

MATT. xx. 17-28.

"JESUS going up to Jerusalem took the twelve disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the Scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify Him: and the third day He shall rise again. Then came to Him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping Him, and desiring a certain thing of Him. And He said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto Him, We are able. And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My right hand, and on My left, is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.[1] And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."[2]

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[1] . . . "My cup receive,
And of My woes baptismal taste;
But for the crown that angels weave
For those next Me in glory placed,
I give it not in partial love;
But in My Father's book are writ
What names on earth shall lowliest prove,
That they in heaven may highest sit."—*Keble.*

[2] "This same lesson—that, namely, of humility, as taught by the example of Christ—is nobly given by St. Paul in Phil. ii. 5-11, which is the best comment on this verse."—*Canon How.*

"Humility will save our souls; for it will bring us to the feet of Christ, and He will raise us up."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

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MARCH 2.

The Compassion and Foreknowledge of Christ.

MATT. xx. 29-34 and xxi. 1-3.

"AS they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And, behold, two blind men sitting by the wayside, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou Son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto Him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.[1] And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto Me. And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The Lord hath need[2] of them; and straightway he will send them."

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[1] "Lord, have compassion on me as Thou hadst on these blind men; that the eyes of my soul may be opened; that I may recover the sight which sin has deprived me of; that I may see the great goodness of God in sending Thee to redeem us; that I may see the due reward of sin in Thy sufferings and death; that I may follow Thy holy example all the days of my life."—*Bishop Wilson.*

[2] "The Lord hath need."] "Look well at this fact. . . . The Son of God made Himself beholden to the good-will of a man, and for the brief loan of the ass's colt, of little worth. And in so doing He was laying down a rule for the service of His kingdom on earth through all time. He was settling the principle that in the establishment and spreading of His kingdom on earth—His Church—He would be beholden to men for their help; He would use human hands and human hearts, and human services and human property. . . . The Lord of all power in heaven and earth comes to us in the guise of a borrower. He still says to us, 'I have need of this or that.' To one and another He says, 'I have need of *thee*;' but to all His members He says, 'I have need of *thine*.' . . . He borrows of us for our sake; He borrows of that which is His own . . . that He may repay us more richly, and in better things. . . . Christ in His Church (ever since His Ascension) has been calling for men's help, using all they have to give, their labour, their money, their good-will, for the spreading and deepening of His kingdom. . . . When that help has been fully, ungrudgingly rendered to Him, His work has gone forward; and when the help has been stintedly given, then the work has been stinted in growth and depth. . . . The more we give to Him, the more He gives to us. We give the paltry temporal, He His spiritual gifts. He gives for every loving service the desire to do something more. . . . Try to minister to the same rewarding Lord; and then doubt not that, in spite of all our feebleness and unworthiness, we may all at last hear the gracious voice of the All-just and All-merciful, 'Thou hast done what thou couldst: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.'"—*Sermon by Bishop Hobhouse.*

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MARCH 3.

The Second Cleansing of the Temple.

MATT. xxi. 12-16.

"JESUS went into the Temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves, and said unto them, It is written, My House shall be called the House of Prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.[1] And the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple; and He healed them. And when the chief priests and Scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David;[2] they were sore displeased, and said unto Him, Hearest Thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?" (Ps. viii. 2).

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[1] "Compare the first cleansing of the Temple (John ii. 13-17). Both the beginning and the ending of our Lord's public ministry were marked by the same act of authority. It was now just three years since, at the first Passover of the four embraced within that momentous period, Jesus performed a similar act to that here narrated."—*Canon How.*

[2] "The more men accustom themselves to honour the House and ordinances of God, the more they will grow in inward holiness; and the better they are in themselves, the more they will reverence the things and places which belong to God."—*Young's "Daily Readings."*

See the Collect for the Innocents' Day.

"You who the Cross of Christ
Upon your foreheads bear,
When gathered in His Holy Name
Within His House of Prayer:—
Him with your souls adore;
But not with them alone,
The homage of the *body* pay—
He claims it as His own.

Watch not what others do,
Care not what others say;
Think only of Christ's Presence there,
And humbly *kneel* to pray."

"O Lord, we beseech Thee, help us when we go into Thine House of Prayer, that we may worship Thee in spirit and in truth. Guard us from all wandering thoughts and careless behaviour, and let our prayers and praises be acceptable unto Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

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MARCH 4.

The Barren Fig-Tree.

MATT. xxi. 18-22.

"NOW in the morning as He returned into the city, He hungered. And when He saw a fig-tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away.[1] And when the disciples saw it, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away! Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this which is done to the fig-tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea: it shall be done. And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing,[2] ye shall receive."

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[1] "Help us to praise Thee, gracious Lord,
Not with our lips alone;
But let our love in thought and deed
As well as words be shown.
May we not be like barren trees
Where only leaves are found;
But let Thy Holy Spirit's fruits
In all our lives abound."

"Christ's miracles of mercy were unnumbered, and on men: His miracle of judgment was but one, and on a tree."—*Archbishop Trench.*

"'The tree is known by the fruit;' therefore let us do good works, and thereby declare our faith to be a lively Christian faith. Let us, by such virtues as ought to spring out of faith, show our election to be sure and stable. . . . If these fruits do not follow, we do but mock with God, deceive ourselves, and also other men."—"*Homily of Faith.*"

[2] "In prayer, believing."] "Prayer is the outward frame of faith: and faith is the inward soul of prayer. The power of prayer lies in 'believing.' But believing what? That our prayers must certainly be granted? No; in believing that God will do what is best. The prayer that says not 'as Thou wilt' is no prayer of faith. Therefore the words 'ye shall receive' must be taken with the limit which faith lays down;—thou shalt receive, *if* it be for thy good and for God's glory."—*Canon How.*

"May faith each weak petition fill,
And waft it to the skies,
And teach our hearts 'tis goodness still
That grants it or denies. Amen."

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MARCH 5.

Parable of the Two Sons.

MATT. xxi. 23-32.

"WHEN He was come into the Temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto Him as He was teaching, and said, By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?[1] And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven: He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.[2] And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And He said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things. But what think ye? A certain man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented and went.[3] And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I go, sir: and went not.[4] Whether of them twain did the will of his father? They say unto Him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you.[5] For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen it, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him."[6]

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[1] . . . "If John the Baptist were sent from heaven, then they must believe him; but then they must believe Christ's authority to be from heaven too, for John bear record that He was the Son of God" (John i. 34).

[2] "This reasoning of the chief priests and elders is much to be noted, as showing their state of mind. There is no sort of care as to what is *true*. They do not seek *truth*. Their only care is as to what is *safe* and *prudent* to answer. And as they do not really care to know the truth, Christ tells it not to them."

[3] "The son who thus answers represents 'the publicans and the harlots,' bold, open, wilful transgressors of God's law; yet, inasmuch as they know that they are so, more likely to be brought to repentance."

[4] "This is the answer of the Scribes and Pharisees. There is abundant profession. They are even zealous of God's law. Yet . . . their pride and self-righteousness is such that they see not their own need of repentance, and therefore obey not the call to it."—*Canon How.*

[5] "Self-knowledge is the first condition of repentance, and the Pharisee did not possess self-knowledge; therefore it was said to him, 'The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you;' because they knew their guilt, and he did not."—*Mozley's "University Sermons."*

[6] . . . "Those who refuse to obey God's call, *but afterwards* repent, are better than those who profess to obey, but never go beyond profession."—*Canon How.*

"O God, grant that for the time to come I may yield a cheerful obedience to all Thy appointments."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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MARCH 6.

The Parable of the Husbandmen.

MATT. xxi. 33-45.

"HEAR another parable: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto Him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? (Ps. cxviii. 22, 23). Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof. And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And when the chief priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them."[1]

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[1] "*They* fall on the stone who are offended at Christ in His low estate (Isa. viii. 14; Luke ii. 34). Of this sin His hearers were already guilty. There was yet a worse sin which they were on the point of committing, which He warns them would be followed by a more tremendous punishment. They on whom the stone falls, are those who set themselves in distinct and self-conscious opposition against the Lord; who, knowing Who He is, do yet to the end oppose themselves to Him and to His Kingdom; and they shall not merely fall and be broken,—for one might recover himself, though with some present harm, from such a fall as this,—but on them the stone shall fall and shall grind them to powder, in the words of Daniel (ii. 35), 'like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors,' destroying and crushing them for ever."—*Trench "On the Parables."*

"'Seek ye the Lord *while* He may be found.' '*While!*' There is a solemn warning in that one word! It tells thee there is a day coming when the Lord will be sought, but will not be 'found.'"—"*The Night Watches.*"

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MARCH 7.

The "Wedding Garment."

MATT. xxii. 1-14.

"JESUS answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son, and sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding: and they would not come. Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner: my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage. But they made light of it, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise: and the remnant took his servants, and entreated them spitefully, and slew them. But when the king heard thereof, he was wroth: and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the wedding was furnished with guests. And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man[1] which had not on a wedding garment: and he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called, but few are chosen."

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[1] "A man."] "He saw there *a man;* one man,—singular;—not that there will not be found at the last day hundreds of thousands of souls in the same sad plight as this poor man, but to teach us forcibly, by the selection of a single specimen, that no one shall pass muster in the crowd; that not only all, but each, must be judged; that upon each soul in that awful crisis the full glare of Divine Omniscience must be turned in; that the religion which alone will then abide must be personal, deep, individual. Is ours, then, at present a Personal Religion? Is it a growing one? Is there a principle of growth in it? Does it wax stronger against temptations, more steadfast in faith, more constant and more fervent in prayer, as years roll on? Are our views of God and of Christ gradually enlarging and clearing, and becoming more adequate? Are they more humbling to ourselves, but at the same time more inwardly satisfactory than they used to be? Are besetting sins more resolutely and successfully mortified than they used to be? Are our souls, though sometimes stirred by spiritual emotions, like Bethesda's pool? or is the Spirit's agency in them deep, profound, eternal—'a well of water springing up into everlasting life?'"—*Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion."*

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MARCH 8.

Tribute-money.

MATT. xxii. 15-22.

"THEN went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent out unto Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest Thou for any man: for Thou regardest not the person of men.[1] Tell us therefore, What thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye Me, ye hypocrites?[2] Show Me the tribute-money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.[3] When they had heard these words, they marvelled,[4] and left Him, and went their way."[5]

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[1] "How little could they have known of Christ, to suppose that they could deceive Him by their wretched flattery!"

[2] "How instantly and totally does our Lord unmask them!"—*Canon How.*

[3] "They had asked, 'Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?' He corrects them, and says, 'Render'—'Give back.' It was not a voluntary gift, but a legal due. It was perfectly understood among the Jews, and was laid down in the distinctest language by their greatest Rabbis in later days, that to accept the coinage of any king was to accept his supremacy. . . . It was their duty, then, to obey the power which they had deliberately chosen. . . . But Jesus could not leave them with this lesson only. He added the far deeper and weightier words, '*and to God the things that are God's.*' To Cæsar you owe the coin which you have admitted as the symbol of his authority, and which bears his image and superscription; to God you owe yourselves."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

[4] "Well might the false questioners marvel at the wonderful wisdom of Christ's answer, thus turning their deceitful question into a thought to sift their own consciences!"—*Canon How.*

[5] *See* Rom. xiii. 1. "Every soul of man, however high or low in place, must submit to the authorities which are over him. Even the highest in place must submit to the law which is over all. There is no Divine warrant for rebellion. Active obedience is due to all lawful commands; but if human authorities should command anything unlawful (and we must obey God rather than man, Acts iv. 19, v. 29), still the duty of a Christian is to submit to the penalty, though he refuses the obedience."

. . . "All legitimate authority is derived from God."—*Bishop Moberly.*

Pray for those who are in authority over you.

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MARCH 9.

Reply to the Sadducees.

MATT. xxii. 23-33.

"THE same day came to Him the Sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked Him, saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her. Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.[1] But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am[2] the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? (Exod. iii. 6). God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. And when the multitude heard this, they were astonished at His doctrine."

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[1] "His answer was everlastingly memorable. It opened the gates of Paradise so widely that men might see therein more than they had ever seen before. . . . Had they not been ignorant of the power of God, they would not have imagined that the life of the children of the resurrection was a mere reflex and repetition of the life of the children of this world. In that Heaven beyond the grave, though love remains, yet all the mere earthlinesses of human relationships are superseded and transfigured."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

[2] "'I *am* the God of Abraham;' not 'I *was* the God,'—intimating that Abraham, Isaac, etc., were still living, and that He was still their God in their present separate state of existence."—*Dr. Hales.*

"Meditation upon the deeper mysteries of God is full of spiritual profit when we search into these mysteries with reverence. It is hurtful only when our investigations are conducted in a spirit of captiousness and of intellectual pride, which resolves to believe nothing which it cannot understand" (1 Cor. ii.). —*Bishop Moberly.*

"The profitable reading of the Holy Scriptures is frequently interrupted by the vain curiosity of our own minds, which prompts us to examine and discuss, and labour to comprehend those parts that should be meekly and submissively passed over. To derive spiritual improvement from reading, we must read with humility, simplicity, and faith, and not affect the reputation of profound learning."—"*The Imitation of Christ.*"

"O Spirit of Truth, guide me into all truth." *See* John xvi. 13.

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MARCH 10.

The Questioning of the Pharisees.

MATT. xxii. 34-46.

"WHEN the Pharisees had heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked Him a question, tempting Him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the Law?[1] Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind (Deut. vi. 5). This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Lev. xix. 18). On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.[2] While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, What think ye of Christ? whose Son is He? They say unto Him, The Son of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool (Ps. cx. 1)? If David then call Him Lord, how is He his Son?[3] And no man was able to answer Him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions."

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[1] "From St. Mark's fuller account (xii. 28) we should gather that this lawyer did not question our Lord with the same malicious purpose as the former questioners. And this our Lord's simple answer to his question would show. So that we must not take the word 'tempting' here in so bad a sense as it usually bears, but understand it as simply 'proving' Him, 'trying' what answer He would give, possibly even with a desire to learn."

[2] "That is, these two commandments embrace in themselves all that God requires at our hands. There can be no command that does not fall into one or the other of these. So St. Paul says, 'Love is the fulfilling of the Law' (Rom. xiii. 10). If we love God, we shall do our duty to God; if we love man, we shall do our duty to man."—*Canon How.*

[3] "After answering their question, He takes occasion, by asking one Himself, to convince them that they understood not their own Scriptures, nor the words of their own king David, relating to the Messiah. That He should be the Son of David they were aware. 'How then,' He asks further, 'doth David in spirit'—that is, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost—'call Him Lord?' This they could not account for; because they could not discern between His lowly Presence in the flesh as the Son of Mary, and His Divine authority as the Son of God, the Lord of David, and of all mankind. Thus they were put to silence, as the Sadducees had been before them. And thus was shown forth the willingness of God to satisfy in mankind all reasonable inquiries, and His purpose to silence and to confound all perverse questionings of His Word."—*Girdlestone.*

"O Lord Jesus Christ, open Thou mine understanding, that I may understand the Scriptures." *See* Luke xxiv. 45.

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MARCH 11.

The Scribes and Pharisees.

MATT. xxiii. 1-12.

"THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to His disciples, saying, The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:[1] all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not. For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries,[2] and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for One is your Father, Which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for One is your Master, even Christ.[3] But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted."[4]

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[1] "That is, they hold the office of the teachers of Moses' law. Mark how Jesus always upholds appointed offices and ordinances, however greatly abused or misused."

[2] "These were texts of Scripture written upon parchment, and worn upon the forehead and the left arm and side. The practice was taken from the expression which God uses concerning His Law: 'It shall be a sign unto thee upon thine hand, and for a memorial between thine eyes'" (Exod. xiii. 9. *See* also ver. 16, and Deut. vi. 8, xi. 18).

[3] . . . "It is often asked, Are these commands as to titles to be understood literally or no? Certainly not. . . . Indeed, St. Paul proves this point when he speaks of himself as the spiritual *father* to the Corinthians (*see* 1 Cor. iv. 15). The meaning of our Lord is, that Christians are not to seek or to usurp these titles for self-exaltation, nor, in the spirit of the Scribes and Pharisees, to domineer over others."

[4] "The blessedness of true humility is one of the most frequent lessons of our Lord. But it must be *true* humility. Whenever the humbling of self is done to be seen of men, and to gain the credit of humility, it is no longer humility, but becomes pride and hypocrisy."—*Canon How.*

"Avoid, by all means, speaking humbly of yourself to any one except to Him Who seeth in secret. . . . Pride is so inwoven into the very texture of our nature, that *our feelings* are very rarely indeed humble. Now, *if there be humility of expression, where there is no humility of feeling, that is the worst species of hypocrisy.* But humble words are not only evil in themselves, they excite evil. We derive a kind of satisfaction when using them, from the reflection that we are humble,—we become inwardly proud of our humility. The safest rule, and that which is most consistent with courtesy and good breeding, will be to obtrude self as little as possible on the company, to speak as little as possible about self, in order that (O hard attainment!) we may think as little as possible about self."—*Goulburn's "Idle Word."*

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MARCH 12.

Hypocrisy Denounced.

MATT. xxiii. 13-22.

"WOE unto you Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses,[1] and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.[2] Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves. Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the Temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the Temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the Temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon."

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[1] "Ye devour widows' houses."] "These hypocrites won the affection of devout women by their pretended sanctity, and allowed them to expend all their substance upon them, no doubt teaching that their property was devoted to a holy use when thus expended." *Comp.* 2 Tim. iii. 6, 7.

[2] "Greater damnation;" or "condemnation."] . . . "Why were the Scribes to receive this 'greater damnation'? Because not only did they consume all the substance of the deluded women spoken of, but they did so by means of their pretended piety, which made the sin doubly wicked."—*Canon How.*

> "God slights the richest offering
> With which unhallowed hearts adore Him,
> Nor owns the fairest gift we bring,
> If laid with unclean hands before Him."—*Monsell.*

"O God, take the veil from my heart; take the world, take pride, take self out of my heart, and write there all Thy laws, I beseech Thee!"—*Adam's "Private Thoughts."*

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MARCH 13.

Righteous Indignation.

MATT. xxiii. 23-33.

"WOE unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith; these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.[1] Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.[2] Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.[3] Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the Prophets. Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"[4]

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[1] "Within they are full."] "This is a figure, or a sort of short parable, representing the Scribes and Pharisees themselves. They were strict and proper in their lives outwardly, but their hearts were filled with 'extortion' (that is, greedy avarice) and 'excess' (that is, self-indulgence); 'sinful getting and sinful enjoyment' (*Stier*) turned all their outward propriety into hypocrisy."

[2] "There is no outward cleanliness without inward. He who aims at the former without the latter only daubs himself with a coating of vile hypocrisy."

[3] "It has been well said, 'The heart of man can be a temple of the Living God or a grave, a heaven or a hell."—*Stier, quoted by Canon How.*

[4] "The hollowness of Pharisaism always draws forth from our Lord's lips one loud, reiterated, sustained 'Woe!' Whence we gather the sentiments of God towards sin, and learn to adjust Divine severity with Divine goodness. The Love of God freely embraces all, however low they have fallen, who willingly take up their position as sinners. . . . But want of truth in all its forms, insincerity, hypocrisy, parade and demonstration of religious feeling—in short, any sacrifice which men do to the opinion of their fellow-creatures, is offensive to Him in the highest degree."—*Goulburn's "Pursuit of Holiness."*

"Cleanse Thou the thoughts of my heart by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit!"

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MARCH 14.

Lamentation over Jerusalem.

MATT. xxiii. 34-39.

"WHEREFORE, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and Scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city: that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the Temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.[1] O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me[2] henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord" (Ps. cxviii. 26).

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[1] "And did not all the righteous blood shed upon the earth since the days of Abel come upon that generation? Did not many of that generation survive to witness and feel the unutterable horrors which Josephus tells? to see their fellows crucified in jest, 'some one way, and some another,' till room was wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the carcasses? to experience the 'deep silence' and the kind of deadly night which seized upon the city in the intervals of rage? to see 600,000 dead bodies carried out of the gates? . . . to hear the horrid tale of the miserable mother, who, in the pangs of famine, had devoured her own child? to be sold for slaves in such multitudes that at last none would buy them? to see the streets running with blood, and the 'fire of burning houses quenched in the blood of their defenders?' to have their young ones sold in hundreds, or exposed in the amphitheatres to the sword of the gladiator or the fury of the lion, until at last, 'since the people were now slain, the Holy House burnt down, and the city in flames, there was nothing farther left for the enemy to do.'"—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

[2] "Ye shall not see Me."] "Not only is Jesus now departing for ever out of the Temple, but also He is ending His *public* ministry to the Jews, these being His last words spoken in public. All henceforth is for the disciples alone. It is true the Jews actually *saw* Jesus after this, for they saw Him crucified; but they saw Him no more as their Teacher and Saviour. His work with them was done."—*Canon How.*

"O Lord, keep me from presumptuous sins, that I may never grieve Thy Holy Spirit, nor provoke Thee to leave me to myself."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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MARCH 15.

The Destruction of Jerusalem foretold.

MATT. xxiv. 1-13.

"AND Jesus went out and departed from the Temple: and His disciples came to Him for to show Him the buildings of the Temple. And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down. And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the world?[1] And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My Name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another. And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."[2]

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[1] . . . "The Apostles asked Christ concerning the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world. The answer (which occupies the rest of the chapter, and indeed the next also) embraces both events in one. Each of them is a COMING *of Christ;* each of them a coming to judgment. The one is a type and shadow of the other. It is quite the character of prophecy to blend together, or hold, as it were, in one grasp, both its nearer and its more distant fulfilment, so that they *seem* closer together than they really are. . . . The two events, however, are not confusedly mingled together, as might seem to a careless reader. Both are together in the vision before our Lord's eyes, but not confounded. In the earlier part, as far as verse 28th, the nearer event, the destruction of Jerusalem, stands out clearly, although through it there doubtless appears the vast outline of the farther judgment; and in the words in which the former is pictured the latter also is not forgotten. After the 28th verse the more distant and awful event comes out as the prominent and distinct object of the prophecy, though not without constant remembrance of the type which so fitly prefigured it."—*Canon How.*

[2] "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. ii. 10).

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MARCH 16.

Prophetic Warnings.

MATT. xxiv. 14-25.

"AND this Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come. When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place[1] (whoso readeth, let him understand): then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains:[2] let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath Day: for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake[3] those days shall be shortened. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before."

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[1] . . . "We read in the Jewish historian Josephus that *before* the siege" (of Jerusalem) "a body of lawless robbers and murderers, the worst characters from all the surrounding country, came into the city and seized upon the Temple, where they lived, polluting it in the most fearless way, and of course preventing the ordinances of religion being performed. The Christians who had pondered over Christ's words would surely see here 'the abomination of desolation.' These words literally mean 'the hateful power that maketh desolate,' a most fitting description of that band of ruffians, whose mastery over the city caused 'a reign of terror' there."

[2] "Flee into the mountains."] "So well were the Christians forewarned by this discourse of our Lord, that when the time drew near, seeing the signs, they fled from Jerusalem, and the other towns and villages of Judæa (many of which were taken by the Roman army as they marched towards Jerusalem), over the mountains to Pella, a place lying beyond the Jordan. Thus but few Christians perished in the frightful ruin of the Holy City."

[3] "For the elect's sake."] . . . "Let us meditate upon the insight here given us into the reasons of God's dealings. How little do the great ones of this world dream what power it is which hinders or stays their projects! How little do they suspect that the world's history can be moulded and altered by God's care for the welfare of His lowly and unknown people, or by the prayers of nameless saints!"—*Canon How.*

"Unseen thousands 'watch and pray,'
With their lamps all burning,
Hastening with their prayers the day
Of their Lord's returning."—*Monsell.*

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MARCH 17.

Of the End of the World.

MATT. xxiv. 26-36.

"WHEREFORE if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He shall send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.[1] Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, This generation[2] shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and earth[3] shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away. But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but My Father only."[4]

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[1] "Once more the Saviour of the world foretold what should hereafter be. The destruction of Jerusalem was a type or figure of the destruction of the world. As surely as the prophecy against Jerusalem was fulfilled, even to the least particular, so surely will the end of the world at length be brought to pass."—"*Thoughts for the Holy Week.*"

[2] "Generation."] . . . "It seems to have been sufficiently proved that the word here translated 'generation' is used at times to signify a 'race' or 'people;' so that we may interpret our Lord's words as meaning that the Jewish race or people would not pass away till the end. Their city was to be destroyed, their power broken down, and themselves scattered into all lands. This has come to pass. Yet they remain a distinct and separate race still."

[3] "Heaven and earth."] "This is a common expression, simply meaning all created things. 'Heaven' signifies the heavenly bodies, not the abode of God's glory."

[4] . . . "What a rebuke is this verse to the vain and presumptuous prophecies of those who profess to foretell the times which 'the Father hath put in His own power!'" (Acts i. 7).—*Canon How.*

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MARCH 18.

The Coming of the Son of Man.

MATT. xxiv. 37-44.

"BUT as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.[1] For as in the days that were before the Flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the Flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh."[2]

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[1] . . . "The Flood, the ruin of the Cities of the Plain, and the destruction of Jerusalem, are the three chief types of the end of the world. . . . The many will be as unprepared for that day as they were for the three judgments which are its foreshadowing types."—*Canon How.*

[2] "Gird thy heavenly armour on,
Wear it ever night and day;
Ambushed lies the evil one;
'Watch and pray.'

Hear the victors who o'ercame;
Still they mark each warrior's way;
All with one sweet voice exclaim
'Watch and pray.'

Hear above all, hear thy Lord,
Him thou lovest to obey;
Hide within thy heart His word,
'Watch and pray.'

Watch, as if on that alone
Hung the issue of the day;
Pray that help may be sent down;
'Watch and pray.'"

"Lord, grant that the approach of Eternity may urge me to greater diligence in Thy service. May I spend each day, and this day, as if it were to be my last. When the shadows of evening gather around me, may I feel that I have spent a day for God. Nearer a dying hour, may it find me nearer Heaven."—"*The Morning Watches.*"

"Our greatest hopes should lie beyond the grave."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Try to anticipate the Judgment. . . . Picture the Great White Throne—the opened Books—the Day when your secret thoughts shall be published to men and Angels! Think of all this quietly . . . now, while every corner of your heart can be cleansed; now, in this 'accepted time,' when you may find Pardon and Peace."—"*Lent Lectures*" *by the Rev. G. H. Wilkinson.*

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MARCH 19.

"The Faithful and the Evil Servant."

MATT. xxiv. 45-51.

"WHO then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods. But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;[1] and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

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[1] "My lord delayeth his coming."] "This is the very snare of Satan. Whether it be of death or of judgment, he is ever saying, 'It is far off. There is time yet. There is no need for hurry.'"—*Canon How.*

"Watch, then, and pray!
See the dark tempter's snare!
He lurks to smite or to seduce,
Oh, watch, then, unto prayer!

He comes, he smiles,
As angel of the light!
Yet ruler of the darkness he,
And prince of this world's night.

He comes, he speaks!
And still the ancient lie
Is on his lips, to lure and cheat:
'Ye shall not surely die.'

As light shuts out
Each everlasting star,
So does the light of his false noon,
The worlds that shine afar.

Cheat not thyself;
Miss not the one true day;
The end of all things is at hand,
Oh, wake, and *watch*, and pray!"—*Bonar.*

"He who waits for his Master will always endeavour to be in that state in which he desires to be found." "A person whose life is full of good works, whose heart is devoted to God, whose faith and hope are pure and sincere, will never be surprised by death."

"O blessed Jesus! support my spirit when I come to die with this comfortable promise, 'This day shalt thou be in Paradise.'"—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Fight valiantly, so as to ensure at that one hour the victory which occupies all the days of our life in preparing for it."—*Scupoli's "Spiritual Combat."*

"This life is given us only that we may attain to Eternal Life."—"*Spiritual Letters of S. Francis de Sales.*"

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MARCH 20.

The Ten Virgins.

MATT. xxv. 1-13.[1]

"THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins,[2] which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. But the wise answered, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.[3] And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh."[4]

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[1] "In this chapter the last Judgment 'stands out grandly and alone.'. . . . The lesson of the parable of the Ten Virgins is that of the necessity of *perseverance unto the end.*"

[2] "Ten virgins."] "Who are meant by these? All Christians who are expecting the coming of the Lord—the heavenly Bridegroom. Observe, this parable does not say a word about the wicked and impenitent. *They* do not go forth to meet Christ. The ten virgins are all of them making *some* efforts to get ready. They have all *some* religion. They all begin well."

[3] "It is God Who sells the true oil of the Holy Spirit. If ye would have it, seek it from Him in prayer and other means of grace."—*Canon How.*

[4] "Seek to be living in such an habitual state of holy preparedness, that even the midnight cry would not take thee by surprise; that the summons which will prove so startling to a slumbering world, would be to thee the herald of glory; 'He cometh, He cometh to judge the earth!' O the blessedness of being able, in sweet confidence in the Saviour's second coming, to compose myself to rest night after night, and say, 'Even though the trumpet of judgment should break upon my ears, I will both lay me down in peace and sleep; for Thou, Lord, only makest me dwell in safety!'"—"*The Night Watches.*"

"Vouchsafe me the gift of perseverance, on which my eternal happiness depends."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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MARCH 21.

Parable of the Talents.

MATT. xxv. 14-30.

"FOR the kingdom of heaven is as a man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey. Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made them other five talents. And likewise he that had received two, he also gained other two. But he that had received one went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more. His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant,[1] thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

[1] "His wickedness was no wickedness after the world's estimate; it consisted simply in slothfulness. Had harmlessness been the criterion of worth, the servant, being perfectly harmless, would have passed without censure. But God gives us talents *for an end*. The abilities, resources, influence, opportunities of improvement which He bestows, are designed to *further an object*. And if they do not further that object, . . . condemnation ensues as surely and as sternly as if they had been misemployed."—*Goulburn's "Idle Word."*

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MARCH 22.

The Day of Judgment.

MATT. XXV. 31-40.[1]

"WHEN the Son of Man shall come in His glory, and all the holy Angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered,[2] and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me. Then shall the righteous answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? when saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me."[3]

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[1] "Together with the present description must be read St. John's account of the Vision revealed to him of the same great Judgment" (Rev. xx. 12-15).

[2] "I was an hungered."] "'The Ten Virgins' taught the blessedness of inward grace; 'The Talents' taught the blessedness of a faithful use of God's gifts; here we are taught the blessedness of acts of charity. Each unfolds to us a different principle on which our judgment will depend, and this in order to bring the one point as forcibly as possible to our consciences. It would be a great error to take any one of these three passages, and to suppose that the one point it puts forward is the *only* one which will be brought into judgment. We must not only *compare* Scripture with Scripture, but also *combine* Scripture with Scripture, if we would know the truth."

[3] "Inasmuch as ye have done it."] "How wonderful is the privilege and blessedness of almsgiving! To minister to the poor is to minister to Christ. Even the 'cup of cold water' shall not lose its reward."—*Canon How.*

"Flatter not yourselves that judgment is a great way off, when you know not how near death is, which will close your account. Therefore be ye also ready."—*Dean Sherlock.*

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MARCH 23.

Sins of Omission.

MATT. XXV. 41-46.

"THEN shall He say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not. Then shall they also answer Him, saying, Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee? Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to Me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."[1]

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[1] *See* the foregoing parable of "The Talents" (Matt. xxv.), and mark well *why* "the unprofitable servant" was condemned. "It is not that he had done those things which he ought not to have done, but only that he had *left undone* those things which he ought to have done. It is for sins of *omission*, not for sins of *commission* that he is condemned. So here: the condemnation of those on the left hand in the great Judgment is 'Inasmuch as ye *did it not*.' Surely among the moral upright and respectable there are many 'unprofitable servants!'"—*Canon How.*

"Be Thou my soul's preserver,
For Thou alone dost know
How many are the perils
Through which I have to go;
O loving Jesu, hear my call,
And guard and save me from them all. Amen."

"O blessed Saviour, Who, when Thou shalt at the last day come to judge the quick and the dead, wilt render to every one according to his works, either reward or punishment; give me grace so to pass this earthly pilgrimage according to Thy holy Will, that at that day I may be (through Thy merits) thought worthy to be received into Thy Heavenly mansion, there to praise and bless Thee with the holy company of blessed Saints and Angels for evermore; and be merciful to me. Amen."—*Litany of Bishop Andrewes.*

"If thou despisest the Will of a gracious God, when He inspires thee with thoughts of good, thou wilt bitterly feel the terrible Will of an avenging God."—*St. Hier.*

"All our acts here shall have their full and exact equivalent and recompense in judgment."—*Rev. A. W. Thorold.*

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MARCH 24.

An Act of Love.

MATT. xxvi. 1, 2, 6-13.

"WHEN Jesus had finished all these sayings, He said unto His disciples, Ye know that after two days is the Feast of the Passover, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified. . . . Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper, there came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His head, as He sat at meat. But when His disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor. When Jesus understood it, He said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon Me. For ye have the poor always with you; but Me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on My body, she did it for My burial. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her."[1]

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[1] . . . "Our Lord, Whose deep sympathy with the poor was shown by His assuming their condition, by His lifelong ministrations for them and among them, and by His laying upon His followers this injunction, 'Sell that ye have, and give alms,' even He abundantly vindicates an appropriation of the alabaster box, which did not leave a single doit of its value for the poor--which consecrated it and its contents exclusively to His own honour. Mary, believing what even Apostles were slow to believe, that He would shortly meet with a painful and cruel death at the hands of His enemies, and fearing that under these circumstances His followers would be debarred from access to His sacred Body, used her store of costly oil to embalm Him by anticipation; she could not endure the thought that He should go without this outward visible sign of the homage which her heart, and the hearts of all His true disciples, had so long paid Him. . . . The lesson, therefore, is that any costly or expensive article bestowed upon His service, with a view to do Him honour thereby, may be full as acceptable to Him, and as graciously accepted, as if it had been employed in some work of active benevolence, or converted to the use of some charitable institution. Remember this in connection with the restoration and decoration of Churches, a work so common in these days. Of course this work may be engaged in from a mere delight in the beauties of art, . . . in which case it may no doubt be the sign of a cultivated mind, but is no sign at all of a sanctified heart, and has no religious value whatever. But suppose a man's motive in decorating a Church, or in giving some costly article . . . to be used in the Church's services, to be a sentiment of indignation at seeing anything shabby, mean, or cheap, used in ministrations to Christ, and a feeling that we ought to give Him of our very best and costliest, . . . in this case we may not 'murmur against' him. . . . Our Lord not only vindicates Mary for acting as she has done, but crowns her action with a wreath of imperishable renown. Her fame is to be as widely spread as His own glad tidings. . . . So that the word stood fast in her case, 'Them that honour Me, I will honour.'"—*Goulburn's "Cathedral System."*

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MARCH 25.

The Supper with the Twelve.

MATT. xxvi. 17-25.

"NOW the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Passover? And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at thy house with My disciples.[1] And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover. Now when the even was come, He sat down with the twelve. And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me. And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?[2] And He answered and said, He that dippeth his hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.[3] Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said."

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[1] "Blessed the house chosen for such a feast! But it must be made ready for the visit of the Divine Master. What saith He to us? 'If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me' (Rev. iii. 20). Are we then making ready?" *See* Luke xii. 37.

[2] "Lord, is it I?"] "Let us not pass by this solemn scene without applying it to our own hearts. Are there none of us who have eaten and drunk with Christ, and yet are ready to betray Him? who have knelt at His holy Feast, and yet in our lives have denied Him? Let each solemnly ask the question, Is it I?"

[3] . . . "In His solemn prayer to His Father, Jesus calls Judas 'the son of perdition' (John xvii. 12). How awful to think of one so near to Christ and yet so lost! That such a thing should be possible is a terrible warning to all such as have great privileges, and much outward nearness to Christ and holy things."—*Canon How.*

"O Thou Who, at the hour of eating the Passover, didst institute the Sacrament of Thy Supper, a holy and perpetual memorial of Thy precious Body and Blood; make us thankful and diligent partakers of the same, that we may eat and drink thereof, never to condemnation, but always to the obtaining remission of our sins, and all other benefits of Thy Passion, and save us."—*Bishop Andrewes' "Devotions."*

"That, unworthy though we be,
We may ever dwell with Thee,
Grant us, Holy Jesu. Amen."

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MARCH 26.

The Institution of the Lord's Supper.

MATT. xxvi. 26-34.

"AND as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is My Body.[1] And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is My Blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.[2] And when they had sung an hymn,[3] they went out into the Mount of Olives. Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad (Zech. xiii. 7). But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. Peter answered and said unto Him, Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, yet will I never be offended.[4] Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice."[5]

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[1] . . . "The best commentary upon our Lord's words is to be found in His own wonderful discourse in John vi., and in the thoughtful study of the words of His Apostle St. Paul (1 Cor. x. 16, 17, xi. 23-29). Next to these, perhaps no more valuable statement of doctrine upon this sacred subject exists than that contained in the last five answers of the Church Catechism."—*Canon How.*

[2] "The Holy Communion is by Christ made the type of the Heavenly marriage-feast."—"*Brighstone Sermons.*"

> "Before Thy Death this Feast Thou didst ordain,
> The antidote against eternal pain;
> Thy Saints will imitate Thy loving care,
> And by the Altar for the Cross prepare."—*Bishop Ken.*

[3] "There can be little doubt that this refers to the Passover Psalms. No one can read these Psalms (especially cxviii.) without seeing how many portions must have been singularly suitable to our Lord this night."

[4] "We must not fail to note how self-confidence is ever the herald of an approaching fall."—*Canon How.*

[5] "Preserve me, gracious Lord, from a presumptuous opinion and dependence on my own strength without the aids of Thy grace; let me see in this sad instance my weakness without Thy assistance, and my ruin without Thy help."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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MARCH 27.

The Agony in Gethsemane.

MATT. xxvi. 36-46.

"THEN cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy. Then said He unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me.[1] And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed,[2] saying, O My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt. And He cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O My Father, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done. And He came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. And He left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then cometh He to His disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray Me."

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[1] "Blessed are they who are allowed, and who are able, to Watch with Christ! This we may do in prayer and meditation. Yet how few of us can Watch with Him for even half 'one hour'! . . . Watchfulness and prayer are the two weapons with which His faithful soldiers and servants may best ward off the assaults of temptation."

[2] "Behold the Son of God praying in lowliest reverence of posture. If our hearts are truly praying—if we are truly conscious of God's Presence, when we pray, we too shall 'fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker' (Ps. xcv. 6). Alas that our Master should fall on His face, while we so often refuse to bend the knee!"—*Canon How.*

"If for one moment, sin seem slight,
Or our offences few or light,
They'll take their proper form, when we
Kneel by Thee in Gethsemane."—*Monsell.*

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MARCH 28.

The Kiss of Judas.

MATT. xxvi. 47-56.

"WHILE He yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now he that betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast. And forthwith He came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed Him. And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come?[1] Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took Him. And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew a sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?[2] In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take Me? I sat daily with you teaching in the Temple, and ye laid no hold on Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook Him, and fled."[3]

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[1] "This question is not asked in order to obtain an answer, but, like that related by St. Luke, 'Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?' is meant as a reproving appeal to the conscience of the traitor: 'Think what it is thou hast come to do. Consider what thou hast undertaken.' The gentleness of our Lord's reproof is very marvellous. . . . The kiss of Judas was the crown of hypocrisy, and must have been even more hateful to Christ than the spitting of the rabble. Open enmity and insult always seemed to Him more endurable than secret malice under the veil of friendliness. Are there no sins in these days bearing a fearfully strong likeness to the kiss of Judas?"

[2] "Behold the Lord grasping the cup He but now prayed might pass away! . . . His Father had put the cup into His hand, and He will drink it to the dregs" (*see* John xviii. 11).—*Canon How.*

[3] "O Thou Who, when supper was ended, and night drew on, didst permit Thy own disciple to betray Thee to Thy enemies, and wast content to be apprehended by them; enable us to imitate, under all injuries and oppressions, that meekness which admitted the traitor's kiss, and surrendered Thy Person to those, whom Thy Word struck down to the ground, and save us."—*Bishop Andrewes' "Devotions."*

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MARCH 29.

False Witnesses.

MATT. xxvi. 60-64 and xxvii. 11, 12.

"AT the last came two false witnesses, and said, This Fellow said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days. And the high priest arose, and said unto Him, Answerest Thou nothing? what is it which these witness against Thee? But Jesus held His peace. And the high priest answered and said unto Him, I adjure Thee by the Living God, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said:[1] nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter[2] shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. . . . And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked Him, saying, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest. And when He was accused of the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing."[3]

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[1] "This is a solemn form of answering 'Yes, thou hast said the truth.' Jesus does not refuse to answer a question so solemnly put, and which sums up the whole accusation against Him in a few words. To the charge of being 'the Christ, the Son of God,' He can but plead guilty. Silence now might be misunderstood."

[2] "The word 'hereafter' literally means 'henceforth,' or 'from this time,' so that our Lord's words can hardly be spoken only of His second coming at the last day. They seem to imply that from the very time of His condemnation and Death His power and glory would begin to manifest themselves. They may perhaps be unfolded thus: 'Although thou now sittest on thy throne of power and judgest Me, yet after this thou shalt see Me sitting on My throne of power, for thou shalt see My kingdom set up in the world, and at last thou shalt see Me coming in the clouds of heaven as Judge of all the world.'"—*Canon How.*

[3] "Proudly in his hall of judgment,
There to play his fearful part,
Sat the Roman Pontius Pilate,
Clear in head, but cold in heart.

Bound and silent stood before him,
Meek and sad, the Lord of all,
Listening to His false accusers,
In that awful judgment hall.

Listening to His words perverted,
All too gentle to complain;
Though one word had struck them speechless,
Yet not answering again.

Thousands round like storm-tossed ocean
Fling their furious rage on high;
Shouting in their wild commotion,
Crucify Him, crucify!"—*Monsell.*

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MARCH 30.

The Great Darkness.

MATT. xxvii. 45-50.

"NOW from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.[1] And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice,[2] saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me? (Ps. xxii. 1.) Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This Man calleth for Elias. And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave Him to drink. The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save Him. Jesus, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost."

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[1] "It was noon, and at the Holy City the sunshine should have been burning over that scene of horror with a power such as it has in the full depth of an English summer-time. But instead of this, the face of the heavens was black, and the noonday sun was turned into darkness on 'this great and terrible day of the Lord.' It could have been no darkness of any natural eclipse, for the Paschal moon was at the full; but it was one of those 'signs from heaven' for which, during the ministry of Jesus, the Pharisees had so often clamoured in vain."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

> . . . "One pitying look
> He turned to those who mocked, one upward glance
> Of love and prayer unspoken, and there fell
> On Him and them a silence. O'er the sky
> A darkness stole, as when the sun's eclipse
> Affrights the nations, and the mocks were hushed."
> —"*Lazarus and other Poems.*"

> "The sun withdraws his light,
> The midday heavens grow pale;
> The moon, the stars, the universe,
> Their Maker's Death bewail."

[2] "By Thine own sorrow on the Cross,
That agonizing cry,
Thy sense of that one moment's loss,
When darkness veiled the sky,
And hid Thy Father's face from Thee;
Hide not Thy face, O Christ, from me!"—*Monsell.*

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MARCH 31.

The Last Commission and Promise.

MATT. xxviii. 9, 10, 16-20.

"AS they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held Him by the feet, and worshipped Him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell My brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me. . . . Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,[1] baptizing them[2] in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway,[3] even unto the end of the world. Amen."

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[1] . . . "The 'kingdom of heaven' is now fully established, and the servants are sent forth to gather all men into that kingdom. Here is the great missionary command to the Church, repeated, it seems, in other words, as the last command of the King, ere His bodily Presence was withdrawn from His earthly kingdom (*see* Mark xvi. 15). How mighty in force, how binding in obligation, must be such a command at such a time! Let us only pause to note this:—that the Lord lays upon man the carrying out of His own great purposes, and therefore these purposes will only be effected in proportion to man's faithfulness in fulfilling the charge laid upon him. The doubter asks, 'Why has not Christianity done more in the world?' Here is the answer: 'Because man has not done more.' Christ could do His work without man's aid, but it is His holy will that man's faithfulness should be in the main the measure of the growth of His kingdom."

[2] "Baptizing them."] "Thus does our Lord make the Holy Sacrament of Baptism a special mark and an essential ordinance of His Church. . . . The 'baptizing' and 'teaching' are the two great ways of making disciples of all nations."

[3] "Lo, I am with you alway."] "O most gracious and blessed promise! What can we desire more than to have Christ with us all our days, even to the end; not present with us locally and sensibly, in bodily Presence, but in our hearts and to our faith! The manner of His Presence is a mystery. We see Him not; but we are to believe that we possess Him, and have been brought under the virtue of His saving Hand. He is *with us* now in this world; and, if we are faithful to Him, we shall be *with Him* for ever in the world to come. Amen."—*P. Young, quoted by Canon How.*

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APRIL 1.

The "Voice from Heaven."

MARK i. 9-11.

"IT came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, He saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon Him: and there came a Voice from heaven, saying, Thou art My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."[1]

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[1] "Our Church teaches us that God, 'by the Baptism of His well-beloved Son in the river Jordan, did sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sin.' And surely we may suppose that our blessed Lord, in submitting to be baptized, not only would fulfil all those legal observances which are in sinful man acts of submission to God, and means of grace and righteousness, but also would hallow and ennoble the special rite of Baptism, which He afterwards exalted to be one of the two Sacraments of His Church (Matt. xxviii. 19). By the visible descent of the Holy Spirit at the time of His Baptism, He would also teach us to look for the inward and spiritual grace, and especially for the blessed gift of the Holy Spirit, in the faithful use of the outward sign and ordinance. The Christian must be born again 'of water and of the Spirit' (John iii. 5). Let the baptized Christian be very watchful lest he fall from his 'state of salvation,' and grieve or quench that Blessed Spirit, by Whose power alone he is born again, and by Whose power alone he can live unto God. 'By the Sacrament of Baptism thou wast made a Temple of the Holy Spirit; do not by evil deeds drive away from thyself so great an Inmate, and subject thyself again to the service of the Devil'" (*Leo the Great*).—*Canon How.*

"As for you who have by Baptism put on Christ, it is your part and duty, being made a child of God and of the light, by faith in Jesus Christ, to walk answerably to your Christian calling, and as becomes the children of light, 'remembering always that Baptism representeth unto us our profession, which is to follow the example of our Saviour Christ.'"—*Book of Common Prayer.*

"O loving Lord, Who wouldst enter the river Jordan, and there be baptized by Thy forerunner, John the Baptist; be pleased that I may be purified in this life by Thy merits, and thereby washed from all my sins; and be merciful to me."—*Litany of Bishop Andrewes.*

"The Baptismal Covenant is the germ of the world's education; Baptismal Grace is the early rain which makes the tender shoot put forth its first leaves, which are afterwards to be watered with the fresh dews and latter rain of the Spirit, given in prayer, in the reading of God's Word, in Confirmation, in the Holy Eucharist, and in the other regular ordinances of Religion."—*Bishop Wordsworth.*

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APRIL 2.

The Call of Christ.

MARK i. 14-20.

"NOW after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled,[1] and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel. Now as He walked by the sea of Galilee, He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him.[2] And when He had gone a little farther thence, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway He called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Him."

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[1] "That is, the set time of waiting and preparation, the time of God's sending His servants the Prophets, the time of the Old Covenant. And now God is about to speak to us by a 'Son' (Heb. i. 1, 2. *Comp.* the parable of 'The Vineyard' (Matt. xxi. 37).

[2] "Blessed they who follow whenever the Lord calls! The simple, unquestioning obedience of these poor unlearned men ended in their being princes in the kingdom of heaven."—*Canon How.*

"He called them and they left,
Forsook for Him their all;
They heard the Voice and followed Him,
Submissive to His call.

His one Command prevails,
No second word they need;
His Voice has proved Omnipotent,
They walk as He may lead.

They follow to the Cross;
They follow to the Crown;
Planting their footsteps upon His,
Making His path their own.

To work the work of God,
To breathe for Him their breath,
For Him to spend and to be spent,
Facing all fear and death.

Forgetting all behind,
They press on to the prize,
Keeping the Crown that fadeth not
Ever, before their eyes.

Grasping the recompense,
Counting all loss but gain;
Glad with their Lord to suffer here
That with Him they may reign."
—*Bonar.*

See the Collects for St. Andrew's and St. James's Days.

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APRIL 3.

The Unclean Spirit in the Synagogue.

MARK i. 21-27.

"AND they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath Day He entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as One that had authority, and not as the Scribes. And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out,[1] saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee Who Thou art, the Holy One of God.[2] And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him."

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[1] "No doubt this man was not at all times violent, or he would not have been in the synagogue. It was the Presence of Christ, which caused the unclean spirit to cry out."

[2] "The Holy One of God."] "The testimony which evil spirits bore to our Lord's Person and character is very remarkable. They plainly possessed a spiritual insight far beyond that of man. The Presence of Christ is a trouble to them. They know His power and holiness, and they shrink and cower before Him. They 'believe and tremble' (James ii. 19). . . . 'We may behold in these evil spirits who knew and acknowledged Christ, the picture of that character which is most hateful to God, namely, knowledge without love, or outward acknowledgment of Christ with inward hatred of His holiness.'"—*Canon How.*

"Understand the sacred import of the name of Jesus. Frame a perfect idea of His office in the world and in you. You, too, must call His name Jesus from your own experience. Consider yourself as a guilty, helpless creature, perishing in sin, and then every word He spoke, and every miracle He wrought, will draw you to Him for the salvation you want, and can have only from Him."—*Rev. T. Adam.*

"Oh, help us, Jesu, from on high!
We know no help but Thee;
Oh, help us so to live and die
As Thine in Heaven to be! Amen."

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APRIL 4.

Prayer.

MARK i. 35-39.

"AND in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.[1] And Simon and they that were with him followed after Him. And when they had found Him, they said unto Him, All men seek for Thee. And He said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.[2] And He preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils."

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[1] "Blessed are they who, like their Master, can rescue from sleep precious hours for that silent and undisturbed communion with God which the busy day denies them! Even in the busiest life time must be found for prayer. Christ's life is divided between labour and prayer. So is the blessed existence of the holy Angels. And they who would be like Christ, and do God's will as the Angels, must labour actively and pray devoutly."—*Canon How.*

"There are few Christians, however far advanced in piety and spiritual life, who do not frequently feel how difficult it is at times to centre all their thoughts upon God when they are engaged in prayer. Wandering thoughts will come in like a crowd of troublesome visitors and fill the mind, so that it resembles the inn where there was 'no room for Jesus.' Now it is plainly our duty to fight against this terrible scourge to true devotion. . . . Prayer should be deliberate, that we may have time to attend. Oh, don't hurry when you are speaking to God! Don't run on so fast that you can hardly bring before your mind the ideas to which you give utterance. . . . Prayer, to be real, must be calm, solemn, reverent. The way in which we sometimes rush into God's Presence, and begin our words of prayer before the mind has time to collect itself and know what it is about, is simply shocking. Imagine any one rushing into the presence of the Sovereign with some petition for a mere earthly favour! We should feel the rudeness and indignity quickly enough then. But it really seems as if we sometimes thought, 'Anything will do for God.' Oh, be reverent in prayer!"—*W. W. H.*

"O Thou by Whom we come to God!
The Life, the Truth, the Way!
The path of prayer Thyself hast trod;
Lord! teach us how to pray."—*Montgomery.*

[2] Isa. lxi. 1.

"Give me, O God, the spirit of true devotion, such as may give life to all my prayers, so that they may find acceptance in Thy sight, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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APRIL 5.

The Leper cleansed.

MARK i. 40-44.

"THERE came a leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth His hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. And as soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. And He straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest,[1] and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them."[2]

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[1] The priest had the office of judging when a person was clean from leprosy, and of restoring him to the social position which, while a leper, he had lost." *See* Lev. xiv.

[2] "Thank-offerings for special mercies are thus sanctioned by God's Word (*see* also Luke ii. 24), as well as in accordance with our natural feelings and reason."—*Canon How.*

"In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thess. v. 18).

"He came a leper, all unclean and foul;
He left, as fresh as freshest infancy.
So come I to Thy Feet, unclean in soul;
So leave I, Lord, cleansed and restored by Thee.

'Lord, if Thou willest, Thou canst make me clean.'
He knew the *power*, the *love* he did not know.
That power he sought; nor pleaded he in vain;
The love he knew not came in fullest flow.

Both power and love are in Thee plenteous still;
As full for me as they were once for him.
Still, Lord, I hear Thee saying now, 'I will,'
Let not my ear be dull, my eye be dim.

Give to my being heavenly strength and youth.
Make all the powers of this my healèd soul
Inlets of light, of holiness and truth;
Thy Love has healed me, and I shall be whole."—*Bonar.*

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APRIL 6.

The Cure of Soul and Body.

MARK ii. 2-12.

"AND straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and He preached the Word unto them. And they come unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four. And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay. When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.[1] But there were certain of the Scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this Man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, He said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins (He saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."[1]

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[1] "The paralytic comes with faith for *bodily* health, and he receives a greater gift—health of the *soul*, and bodily health also."—*Wordsworth.*

Here "learn what faith and love can do,
When they to God and man are true,
And how that God approves
The deep devotion which would share
The burden of another's care,
And ever trusts and loves."—*Monsell.*

"Faith and love overcome all difficulties to get to Christ."—*Canon How.*

. . . "Let us take shame to think how deep has been our affliction under the loss of health, compared with the dull apprehension we feel of the frailty of our souls. . . . Let us aim, above all things, to obtain from Christ this gracious sentence, 'Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.'"—*Girdlestone.*

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APRIL 7.

Eating with Publicans and Sinners.

MARK ii. 13-17.

"AND He went forth again by the seaside; and all the multitude resorted unto Him, and He taught them. And as He passed by, He saw Levi the son of Alphæus sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him.[1] And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and His disciples: for there were many, and they followed Him. And when the Scribes and Pharisees saw Him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto His disciples, How is it that He eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? When Jesus heard it, He saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."[2]

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[1] "At once he rose, and left his gold:
His treasure and his heart
Transferred, where he shall safe behold
Earth and her idols part;
While he beside his endless store
Shall sit, and floods unceasing pour
Of Christ's true riches o'er all time and space,
First angel of His Church, first steward of His Grace.

Nor can ye not delight to think
Where He vouchsafed to eat;
How the Most Holy did not shrink
From touch of sinner's meat;
What worldly hearts and hearts impure
Went with Him through the rich man's door,
That we might learn of Him lost souls to love,
And view His least and worst with hope to meet above."—*Keble.*

[2] "I thank Thee, O Jesus, for this instance of Thy charity for sinners. I do indeed confess that I am one of that wretched number, and do beseech Thee to receive me, though a very unworthy guest, that I may eat at Thy Table, and be partaker of Thy favours."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"St. Matthew, also called Levi, . . . had a lucrative occupation; . . . yet he left all and followed Jesus, the despised Teacher, Who had not where to lay His Head."—*Parish Magazine.*

"O Almighty God, grant us grace to forsake all covetous and inordinate love of riches, and to follow Thy Son Jesus Christ."

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APRIL 8.

Times and Seasons.

MARK ii. 18-22.

"THE disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast: and they come and say unto Him, Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Thy disciples fast not? And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the Bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.[1] But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.[2] No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles."[3]

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[1] "Our Lord uses St. John the Baptist's own comparison in His answer to his disciples. St. John the Baptist had compared himself to the 'friend of the Bridegroom "rejoicing" greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice' (John iii. 29). Such joy the disciples had, so long as Christ, the heavenly Bridegroom, was with them. Not only their new labours and constant occupation would be a reason for their not fasting, but also it was no time for fasting and mourning while they possessed the bliss of His Presence. But the time was coming when that joy would be theirs no more, and then would be indeed a time of fasting and mourning."—*Canon How.*

[2] "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Eccles. iii. 1).

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Cor. x. 31).

[3] "Three grand exercises of religion represent man's duties to himself, his neighbour, and his God, and have such a close reciprocal connection that not one of them can be thoroughly fulfilled in the neglect of others—fasting, alms-giving, and prayer. . . . We are bound to stamp upon our whole life the brand of self-discipline, munificence, and devotion. Above all, let us not indulge the vain dream of keeping the mind bright, and spiritual, and healthful, while no bridle of abstinence is laid upon the lower appetites. If it was necessary for St. Paul's safety to keep under his body and bring it into subjection, how much more for our own! And the reward of such self-discipline, accompanied by fervent prayer, will soon be found not only in the brighter intuitions into Divine truth, . . . but also in a growing preparedness to meet our Lord when He comes, either to the Church, His spiritual Temple, at His second Advent, or to the temple of our own hearts at death."—*Goulburn's "Cathedral System."*

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APRIL 9.

The Sabbath.

MARK ii. 23-28.

"AND it came to pass, that He went through the corn-fields on the Sabbath Day; and His disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn. And the Pharisees said unto Him, Behold, why do they on the Sabbath Day that which is not lawful? And He said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him? How he went into the house of God in the days of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shewbread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him? And He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath: therefore the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath."[1]

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[1] "O holy Sabbath Day!
Full of the purest bliss!
What treasure on life's way
Find we so fair as this?

Thou wert to God a rest,
Thou art a rest to man;
And they who know thee best
Hallow thee all they can.

The anxious mind o'erwrought—
To save the precious store—
Lays down its load of thought
Beside thy golden door!

Oh, how such days help on
Along the Heavenly road,
Steps upward—one by one—
Into the rest of God!

Sweet Sabbath! still the same
As in the days of old,
Not lost, because Christ's Name
Is stamped upon thy gold.

Thy name we need not lose,
Because thou didst array
Thyself in brighter hues,
Becoming 'the Lord's Day.'

Both names are dear and blest,
In each a meaning lies;
From making—God did rest;
In saving—Christ did rise.

As warp and woof enfold,
God weaves in one the two—
The strictness of the Old!
The freedom of the New!"

—*Monsell.*

"God grant that every one of us may practically and in his heart sanctify the blessed Day, and carry forth its hallowing influences over all the days of the week, striving to bring them all to the standard and spirit of the first day."—*Stowell.*

"Because He was the Son of Man, the Representative and Brother of all men, knowing their wants and infirmities, He was supreme over the great commandment itself. . . . The case of the Sabbath came under the wide range of words which few Scribes would have dreamt of connecting with it: 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice.'" (Matt. xii. 7).—*Rev. E. H. Plumptre, D.D.*

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APRIL 10.

The Withered Hand.

MARK iii. 1-5.

"AND He entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath Day; that they might accuse Him.[1] And He saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth. And He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath Days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? But they held their peace. And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand.[2] And he stretched it out: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

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[1] "Before in the corn-fields, now in the synagogue, Christ's enemies are watching, that they may accuse Him. O miserable spirit which can turn the holy day of rest into a day of restless suspicion and relentless persecution! While they accuse Jesus of profaning the Sabbath by His works of love and mercy, truly they are profaning the Sabbath, and the synagogue too, by their unholy tempers."—*Canon How.*

[2] "Stretch forth thine hand."] "Observe how frequently some *act* is required on the part of those for whom a miracle is about to be performed, which act itself implies the performance of the miracle. The man could not stretch forth his hand while it remained withered. In the performance of the act the miracle takes place. This may illustrate the law of God's spiritual mercies. He commands the act of faith, the 'Come unto Me,' the 'Ask,' the 'Seek,' the 'Knock,' the 'Strive to enter in,' the 'Work out your own salvation,' the 'Lay hold on eternal life.' And even as Faith obeys and stretches forth her hand, the very power to do so is given, as well as the blessing sought." —*Canon How.*

. . . "A withered hand, being a hand without the sense of touch, is a very just and suitable emblem of the soul of the natural man, which has lost the power of faith. For faith is nothing more nor less than *the faculty of spiritual touch.* . . . Ask of God the restoration of the lost sense of spiritual touch. If you are troubled and rebuffed by distractions in your prayer, pray on; 'stretch forth thy hand' at the gate of Mercy, till something is put into it from above. And strive too. . . . Set about amending faults of character and conduct. . . . The faithful endeavour shall assuredly, in God's good time, be crowned with success. The virtue that is in Christ shall pass into the withered hand; and then the eternal things, that are not seen, shall have for thee the same reality, and exert upon thee the same influence, as the things that are seen and temporal."—*Goulburn's "Pursuit of Holiness."*

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APRIL 11.

The Great Teacher.

MARK iii. 7-12.

"JESUS withdrew Himself with His disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judæa, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did, came unto Him. And He spake to His disciples, that a small ship[1] should wait on Him because of the multitude, lest they should throng Him. For He had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon Him for to touch Him, as many as had plagues. And unclean spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God.[2] And He straitly charged them that they should not make Him known."

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[1] "A small ship."] "This was a frequent pulpit for our Lord" (*see* Matt. xiii. 2; Luke v. 3).—*Canon How.*

"How exquisitely and freshly simple is the language of Christ compared with all other teaching! . . . Straight as an arrow to the mark, His precepts pierce to the very depths of the soul and spirit. All is short, clear, precise, full of holiness, full of the common images of daily life. There is scarcely a scene or object familiar to the Galilee of that day, which Jesus did not use as a moral illustration of some glorious promise or moral law. He spoke of green fields, and springing flowers, and the budding of the vernal trees; of the red or lowering sky; of sunrise and sunset; of wind and rain; of night and storm; of clouds and lightning; of stream and river; of stars and lamps; of honey and salt; of quivering bulrushes and burning weeds; of rent garments and bursting wine-skins; of eggs and serpents; of pearls and pieces of money; of nets and fish. Wine and wheat, corn and oil, stewards and gardeners, labourers and employers, kings and shepherds, travellers and fathers of families, courtiers in soft clothing and brides in nuptial robes—all these are found in His discourses. He knew all life, and had gazed on it with a kindly as well as a kingly glance. He could sympathize with its joys, no less than He could heal its sorrows, and the eyes that were so often suffused with tears as they saw the sufferings of earth's mourners beside the bed of death, had shone also with a kindlier glow as they watched the games of earth's happy little ones in the green fields and busy streets."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

[2] "The devils not only knew Christ, but were constrained to give utterance to their knowledge."—*Canon How.*

"Have a lively faith and trust in God, that He will give thee everything needful for thee, both for His service and thy advantage."—*Scupoli's "Spiritual Combat."*

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APRIL 12.

The Twelve Apostles.

MARK iii. 13-19.

AND He goeth up into a mountain,[1] and calleth unto Him whom He would: and they came unto Him. And He ordained twelve, that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: and Simon He surnamed Peter; and James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and He surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder: and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphæus, and Thaddæus, and Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him: and they went into an house."[2]

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[1] "Into a mountain."] "Where, as we learn from St. Luke, He 'continued all night in prayer to God.' Thus does our Lord Himself, making Himself very Man, prepare for the solemn consecration of His Twelve chosen ones. O blessed Twelve, crowned with the grace won by those nightlong intercessions! So would the Church ever send forth her ministers with fasting and prayer (*see* Acts xiii. 3). For this purpose the Ember Weeks are appointed, with their special prayers for those to be ordained."—*Canon How.*

[2] "Adam is expressly stated by St. Paul to have been a 'figure of Him that was to come.' And, accordingly, as we find Adam manifesting his sovereignty over nature, by bestowing names on the inferior animals, so do we find the Lord Jesus Christ manifesting His sovereignty in His Spiritual Kingdom of Grace, by bestowing names upon His Disciples."—*Goulburn's "Idle Word."*

"Christ is gone up; yet ere He passed
From earth, in Heaven to reign,
He formed one Holy Church, to last
Till He should come again.

His Twelve Apostles first He made
His ministers of grace;
And they their hands on others laid,
To fill in turn their place.

So age by age, and year by year,
His grace was handed on;
And still the Holy Church is here,
Although her Lord is gone.

Let those find pardon, Lord, from Thee,
Whose love to her is cold:
Bring wanderers in, and let there be
One Shepherd and one fold. Amen."

. . . "Make, we beseech Thee, all Bishops and Pastors diligently to preach Thy Holy Word, and the people obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the Crown of Everlasting Glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."
—*Collect for St. Peter's Day.*

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APRIL 13.

Blasphemy.

MARK iii. 22-30.

"THE Scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth He out devils. And He called them unto Him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: because they said, He hath an unclean spirit."[1]

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[1] "This is a very important addition by St. Mark, and a great help towards understanding what is meant by blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, since it plainly implies that the Scribes and Pharisees were guilty—or at least in danger—of it, when they said, 'He hath an unclean spirit.' They were wilfully, and in the face of the clearest evidence, ascribing to Satan the work of the Holy Spirit."—*Canon How.*

See Heb. x. 26, 27. "The particular sin which the Apostle had in his mind was doubtless that of apostasy, the wilful denying of Christ after being fully convinced of the truth of His claims, and having partaken of the influences of His grace. Similarly the sin of the Pharisees, which was also against the light, their ascribing our Lord's miracles to Beelzebub, notwithstanding all the overwhelming evidence furnished by those miracles, in conjunction with His life and character of benevolence and love, is stigmatized as sin against the Holy Ghost, which 'shall not be forgiven,' etc. If we may hazard a conjecture on such a subject, sin of this kind cannot be forgiven, merely because it is a shutting out of that light, the admission and recognition of which is what is meant by repentance. Most assuredly no sin that *can be repented of and renounced*, however aggravated, is out of the reach of the efficacy of Christ's most precious Blood. But I doubt not that this also is true, that the more wilfulness there is in any sin, and the more it is committed in the light and against the light, so much the more does it tend to become that blindness and hardness of heart, and impenitent 'contempt of God's Word and Commandment,' from which we pray, as often as we say our Litany, to be delivered."—*Goulburn's "Child Samuel."*

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APRIL 14.

Relationship with Christ.

MARK iii. 31-35.

"THERE came then His brethren, and His mother, and, standing without, sent unto Him, calling Him. And the multitude sat about Him, and they said unto Him, Behold, Thy mother and Thy brethren without seek for Thee. And He answered them, saying, Who is My mother, or My brethren? And He looked round about on them which sat about Him, and said, Behold My mother and My brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother."[1]

---

[1] "What language could more emphatically declare that *doing* the will of His Heavenly Father—rendering a cheerful obedience to His commandments—is an indispensable characteristic of those whom alone Jesus will acknowledge as His own? beloved by Him with a love that can be only faintly imagined by the fondest relationships of earthly love."

"Grant this day to all near and dear to me, O Lord, as well as to myself, the special tokens of Thy blessing and love. Fold my beloved friends in the arms of Thy mercy. Teaching them to do Thy holy will, do Thou say of them and to them, 'The same is My mother, and sister, and brother.' May we feel that the way in which Thou art leading us is the kindest and the best that covenant love can devise; and when our appointed time on earth is finished, do Thou receive us into everlasting habitations, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Seek to have your name now enrolled in the Book of Life, that you may hear it then confessed before His 'Father and the holy Angels.'"—"*The Morning and Night Watches.*"

"'Hereby we know that we know Christ indeed:' not by our speculative opinions concerning Him, but by our keeping of His commandments."

"Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother."] "He who reflects the Mind of Jesus, imbibes His Spirit; takes His Word as the regulation of his daily walk, and makes His Glory the great end of his being; he who lives *to* God, and *with* God, and *for* God; . . . he it is who can claim as his own this wonderful heritage of Love! If it be a worthy object of ambition to be loved by the good and the great on earth, what must it be to have an Eye of Love ever beaming upon us from the Throne, in comparison with which the attachment here of brother, sister, kinsman, friend—all combined—pales like the star before the rising sun!"—"*The Words of Jesus.*"

"We may well strive to do His Will, for we came into this world for no other end."—"*Spiritual Letters of S. Francis de Sales.*"

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APRIL 15.

The Seed and its Growth.

MARK iv. 1-9.

"AND He began again to teach by the seaside, and there was gathered unto Him a great multitude, so that He entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land. And He taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in His doctrine, Hearken; Behold, there went out a sower to sow: and it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth: but when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.[1] And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. And He said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

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[1] . . . "The seed sown on stony ground, which *forthwith* sprang up, because it had no deepness of earth, proved a failure. Jonah's gourd, which came up in a night, perished also in a night. We never see plants actually growing; we only take notice that they have grown. He who would form a sound judgment of his spiritual progress must throw his eye over long, not short, intervals of time. He must compare the self of this year with the self of last; not the self of to-day with the self of yesterday. . . . The one sign of vital Personal Religion is growth. . . . Is my religion a growing one? In that word 'growing' the decision of the whole question is wrapped up. . . . There is no growth in a life of spiritual routine, in a mechanical performance of duties, however important, or a mechanical attendance upon ordinances, however sacred. There is no growth without zeal and fervour. . . . There is no growth in the deliberate adoption of a low standard, in the attempt to keep back a moiety of the heart from Christ, in consenting to go with God thus far only, and no further. There is no growth in contenting ourselves with respectability, and declining the pursuit of holiness. There is no growth without fervent prayer, 'in spirit and in truth.' And, finally, there is no growth (whatever be the hopes with which we may be flattering ourselves) without continual and sincere effort. . . . Our fireside conversations, . . . our spirit in the transaction of business, . . . all are tending more or less to form the character; . . . we are either making spiritual progress, or falling back from the mark."—*Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion."*

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APRIL 16.

The Use of Parables.

MARK iv. 10-13.

"AND when He was alone, they that were about Him with the twelve asked of Him the parable. And He said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables:[1] that seeing they may see, and not perceive, and hearing they may hear, and not understand;[2] lest at any time they should be converted, and their sins should be forgiven them (Isa. vi. 9, 10). And He said unto them, Know ye not this parable? and how then will ye know all parables?"

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[1] "The Parables were a calling of attention to the spiritual facts which underlie all processes of nature, all institutions of human society, and which, though unseen, are the true ground and support of all. Christ moved in the midst of what seemed to the eye of sense an old and worn-out world, and it evidently became new at His touch, for it told to man *now* the inmost secrets of his being. He found that it answered with strange and marvellous correspondences to another world within him; that it helped to the birth great thoughts of his heart, which before were helplessly struggling to be born; that of these two worlds without him and within, each threw a light and glory on the other."—*Trench "On the Parables."*

[2] "Parables were certainly meant also to lead humble and earnest minds to a deeper and fuller knowledge of the truth. Nay, even for the multitude they would be a means of inducing some to search into the truth; and we read that our Lord used them expressly in order to speak the Word unto them 'as they were able to hear it.' Parables are like pictures shown to children, revealing no more than those who look at them are capable of understanding, and thus at the same time both veiling sacred truths from careless eyes, and exciting in the willing learner the longing to understand them."—*Canon How.*

"There is a book, who runs may read,
Which heavenly truth imparts;
And all the lore its scholars need,
Pure eyes and Christian hearts.

The works of God, above, below,
Within us and around,
Are pages in that book, to show
How God Himself is found."

Two worlds are ours: 'tis only sin
Forbids us to descry
The mystic heaven and earth within,
Plain as the sea and sky.

Thou Who hast given me eyes to see
And love this sight so fair,
Give me a heart to find out Thee,
And read Thee everywhere."

—*Keble.*

"Let us take heed that we apply this Parable, here explained to us by our Lord, to the improvement of our hearts."—*Girdlestone.*

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APRIL 17.

Hearers of the Word.

MARK iv. 14-20.

"THE sower soweth the Word. And these are they by the way-side, where the Word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the Word that was sown in their hearts. And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the Word, immediately receive it with gladness; and have no root[1] in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the Word's sake, immediately they are offended. And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the Word, and the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful. And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the Word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some an hundred."

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[1] "Every one that has 'no root' falls away. The having of that inward root here answers to having a foundation on the rock, to having oil in the vessels, elsewhere (Matt. vii. 25; xxv. 4). And the image itself is not an unfrequent one in Scripture (Ephes. iii. 17; Col. ii. 7; Jer. xvii. 8; Hos. ix. 16). It has a peculiar fitness and beauty, for as the roots of a tree are out of sight, yet from them it derives its firmness and stability, so upon the hidden life of the Christian, that life which is out of the sight of other men, his firmness and stability depend; and as it is through the hidden roots that the nourishment is drawn up to the stem and branches, and the leaf continues green, and the tree does not cease from bearing fruit, even so in the Christian's hidden life, that life which 'is hid with Christ in God,' lie the sources of his strength and of his spiritual prosperity. Such a '*root in himself*' had Peter, who, when many were offended and drew back, exclaimed, 'To whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life' (John vi. 68). This faith that Christ and no other had the words of eternal life and blessedness, was what constituted his root, causing him to stand firm when so many fell away."—*Trench "On the Parables."*

"Grant, O God, that I may with humility receive, and with perseverance hold fast, all those truths which Thou hast revealed."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Know ye not, ye careless hearers, that there is one who is ever on the watch for souls; . . . who is eager to take away the Word out of your hearts . . . by stifling conscience, diverting the attention, . . . lest you should believe and be saved?"—*Bishop Wordsworth.*

"And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees."

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The Responsibility of Hearers.

MARK iv. 21-25.

"AND He said unto them, Is a candle[1] brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick? For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was anything kept secret, but that it should come abroad. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And He said unto them, Take heed what ye hear:[2] with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given. For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath."

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[1] "A candle."] "The 'candle' here seems to mean the light of Christ's doctrine, which He did not bring in order that it might be hidden and kept secret. The disciples might easily mistake our Lord's words when they asked Him to explain the Sower (vers. 11, 12), and imagine the doctrine He taught was for His own favoured disciples, and not for the world at large. The 'candlestick' probably means (as in Rev. i. 20) the Church, which should hold aloft the light of Christ's teaching before the world."

[2] "In St. Luke it is, 'Take heed *how* ye hear,' and so we must interpret the one expression by the other. His full meaning would be, 'Take heed in what spirit ye hear, and how ye regard it.'"—*Canon How.*

"He would warn them against the otiose attention of curiosity or mere intellectual interest, and would fix upon their minds a sense of their moral responsibility for the effects produced by what they heard. He would teach them in such a way that the extent of each hearer's profit should depend largely upon his own faithfulness."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

This warning "tells us that according as the Word is heard and received, will its success be; that, while it is indeed true that all that has gone before in a man's life will greatly influence the manner of his reception of that Word, for every event will have tended either to the improving or the deteriorating the soil of his heart, and will therefore render it more or less probable that the seed of God's Word will prosper there, yet it lies on him now to take heed how he hears, and through this taking heed to ensure, with God's blessing, that it shall come to a successful issue."—*Trench "On the Parables."*

"Oh, of what infinite importance does it make our conduct here, that upon the character formed during this short life hang all the strings of our eternal being!"—*Archdeacon S. Wilberforce.*

"'Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent' (Rev. iii. 3). 'Hold fast' that which thou hast received with the heart; 'repent,' lest thou have 'heard' with the ears in vain."—*Rev. G. Currey, D.D.*

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APRIL 19.

Parable of the Seed growing secretly.

MARK iv. 26-29.

"AND He said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise, night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come."[1]

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[1] "This parable conveys a warning against that erroneous view of religion, which looks for sudden bursts, and violent changes, in the spiritual life of men; and it teaches that the growth of genuine piety is gradual and almost invisible, like the course of vegetation in the natural world."—*Wordsworth.*

"We learn here how the seed grows which is once sown in the 'good ground' of an 'honest and good heart.' There will be a gradual growth and increase; and we must not be disappointed if, when the blade appears, it does not at once bring forth the 'full corn in the ear.' . . . We must not forget that the parable teaches us, not only the duty of growth in grace, and of cherishing and maturing the upspringing blade as it grows, but also the inward power of life and growth which exists in the seed itself. This is a truth full of hope for the trembling beginner. He may think with comfort that God has planted that in his heart which will of itself grow and bear fruit, if he hinder it not by sin or sloth, and he may be confident that 'He Which hath begun a good work in him' will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Phil. i. 6).—*Canon How.*

"The Lord at His first Coming in the flesh sowed the Word of the Kingdom in the world, planted a Church therein, which having done, He withdrew Himself; the heavens received Him till the consummation of all things. Many and many a time since then, the cry has ascended in His ears, 'Oh, that Thou wouldest rend the heavens, that Thou wouldest come down!' Often it has seemed to man, as though the hour of interference had arrived, as though His Church were at its last gasp, . . . as though its enemies were about to prevail against it, and to extinguish it for ever, unless He appeared for its deliverance. But for all this He has not come forth, He has left it to surmount its obstacles; not, indeed, without His mighty help, yet without His visible interference. He has left the divine seed, the plant which He has planted, to grow on by night and by day, through storm and through sunshine, increasing secretly with the increase of God; and will let it so continue till it has borne and brought to maturity all its appointed fruit. And only then, when the harvest of the world is ripe, when the number of His elect people is accomplished, will He again the second time appear unto salvation, thrusting in His sickle, reaping the earth, and gathering the wheat into His barns."—*Trench "On the Parables."*

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The Mustard Seed.

MARK iv. 30-34.

AND He said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.[1] And with many such parables spake He the Word unto them, as they were able to hear it. But without a parable spake He not unto them: and when they were alone, He expounded all things to His disciples."

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[1] "'Small as a grain of mustard seed' was a proverbial expression among the Jews for something exceedingly minute (*see* Luke xvii. 6). The Lord, in His popular teaching, adhered to the popular language. And was not His kingdom even such? What to the eye of flesh could be less magnificent, what could have less of promise, than the commencements of that kingdom in His own Person? Growing up in a distant and despised province, till His thirtieth year He did not emerge from the bosom of His family; then taught for two or three years in the neighbouring towns and villages, and occasionally at Jerusalem, made a few converts, chiefly among the poor and unlearned, and at length falling into the hands of His enemies, without an attempt on His part or that of His followers to release Him, died the shameful death of the Cross: such, and so slight, was the commencement of the universal Kingdom of God. For in this that kingdom differs from the great schemes of this world: these last have a proud beginning, a shameful and miserable end—towers of Babel, which at first threaten to be as high as heaven, but end in being a deserted, misshapen heap of slime and bricks; while the works of God, and most of all His great work, His Church, have a slight and unobserved beginning, with gradual increase, and a glorious consummation. So is it with His kingdom in the world, so is it with His kingdom in every single heart: there too, the Word of Christ falls like a slight mustard seed, seeming to promise little, but issuing, if allowed to grow, in great and marvellous results."

"Theophylact concludes his exposition of the parable with this practical application: 'And be thou also such a grain of mustard,—small, indeed, in appearance, for it becomes thee not to make a spectacle of thy virtue, but fervent, and zealous, and energetic, and armed to reprove.'"—*Trench "On the Parables."*

. . . "Do not be eager, but believe me, that the true way to serve our Lord is in careful, steadfast quietness. . . . Train your heart in patient suffering."—*"Spiritual Letters of S. Francis de Sales."*

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APRIL 21.

The Tempest.

MARK iv. 35-41.

"AND the same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him even as He was in the ship. And there were also with Him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not that we perish? And He arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still.[1] And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of Man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

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[1] "It has been well pointed out how great a contrast there is here with the sleep of Jonah in another storm. Jonah sleeps from a hardened conscience, Jesus from a divine peace. Jonah by his presence brings the danger; Jesus by His Presence brings the safety. It has also been beautifully remarked that, just as Noah and his family in the ark tossed upon the waves of the Deluge were the seed and kernel of the old family of man, so Christ and His Apostles in the boat on the stormy waves of the Sea of Galilee were the seed and kernel of the new family of the Church of Christ. That Church has been ever tossed about by the storms of this world; but, helpless as she has often seemed, her Saviour was in her, and when the waves were roughest and the peril greatest, He has been mighty to save with His 'Peace, be still!' He is still in His Church, and we are sure that 'the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.'"—*Canon How.*

"Why, my soul, so sad and fearful,
Crossing life's dark ocean tide?
Why that upward eye so tearful?
Christ is sleeping by thy side.

He'll awake, and wind and ocean
Soon shall bow before His will,
All thy weary heart's emotion
Hushed before His 'Peace, be still!'"—*Monsell.*

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."

"Oh, make Thy strength perfect in my weakness!"

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APRIL 22.

The Man possessed of "Legion."

MARK v. 2-13.

"WHEN He was come out of the ship, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.[1] But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped Him, and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure Thee by God, that Thou torment me not. For He said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit. And He asked him, What is thy name? And he answered saying, My name is Legion,[2] for we are many. And he besought Him much that He would not send them away out of the country. Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. And all the devils besought Him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea (they were about two thousand), and were choked in the sea."

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[1] . . . "The description here given of this demoniac is very frightful, and he must have been a terror to the whole neighbourhood. We can hardly doubt that it was in order to heal him that Jesus went to this particular spot. He had stilled the strife of the elements; He is now about to still a wilder and fiercer storm,—even that of human passions lashed into fury by the spirits of darkness."

[2] "Legion."] "This word means a 'host' or army. . . . The name implies that it was not one evil spirit alone, but a vast company of evil spirits, which had taken possession of their unhappy victim. As there are mighty ranks and companies of blessed spirits, so are there of evil spirits. These are the principalities and powers against whom we wrestle" (Ephes. vi. 12).—*Canon How.*

"Lord, keep me near Thyself. While I seek to realize, every hour of the day, the power and subtilty of my spiritual adversaries (their name is Legion), may I rejoice in the assurance that greater is He that is with me than all they that can be against me; that 'though an host should encamp against me,' with God on my side 'I need fear no evil.'"—"*The Morning Watches.*"

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APRIL 23.

"Clothed, and in his Right Mind."

MARK v. 15-20.

"AND they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind:[1] and they were afraid. And they that saw it told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. And they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts.[2] And when He was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed Him that he might be with Him. Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.[3] And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him, and all men did marvel."

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[1] . . "And when he takes his seat,
Cloth'd and in calmness, at his Saviour's feet,
Is not the power as strange, the love as blest,
As when He said, 'Be still!' and ocean sank to rest?"—*Keble.*

[2] "They began to pray Him to depart."] "Miserable misguided men! To have beheld their Saviour, and to have besought Him to depart! Life had come to them—life and salvation,—and they thrust them rudely away."—*P. Young.*

"O Holy Spirit, make me to understand, embrace, and love the truths of the Gospel. Give, O God, Thy blessing unto Thy Word, that it may become effectual to my conversion and salvation, and to the salvation of all that read and hear it."—*Bp. Wilson.*

[3] "Jesus would fain leave one more, one last opportunity for those who had rejected Him. On others for whose sake miracles had been performed He had enjoined silence; on this man—since He was now leaving the place—He enjoined publicity. 'Go home,' He said, 'to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee,' etc. And so the demoniac of Gergesa became the first great missionary to the region of Decapolis, bearing in his own person the confirmation of his words."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"O let your songs be of Him, and praise Him: and let your talking be of all His wondrous works!" (Ps. cv. 2.)

"Happy is he who carefully brings together all the benefits he has received from God during his whole life, in order to place them continually before his eyes, and who strives to give Him worthy thanks for them."—*St. Bern.*

"Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him" (Col. iii. 17).

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The Touch of Faith.

MARK v. 25-34.

"A CERTAIN woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, when she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched His garment.[1] For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him, turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes? And His disciples said unto Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched me? And He looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth.[2] And He said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole;[3] go in peace, and be whole of thy plague."

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[1] "Touched His garment."] "May not I too approach Him in prayer, in His sacraments, the more eagerly for the crowd of evil that would keep me from Him?"

[2] "Told Him all the truth."] "This was what our Lord desired: an open confession for her own sake, and for the instruction of others. Fearful of unworthiness, willing to bear shame, truthful in her acknowledgments, and full of faith, she is welcomed in her humility as a 'daughter.' A blessed example to me" (Ps. xxxii. 3, 5).—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

[3] "Thy faith hath made thee whole."] "Our Lord says not 'the hem of My garment'! Nay, the soldiers divided all His garments among them, yet received no blessing. Her *Faith* had made her whole; and why? Because it had brought her to Christ."—*Burgon's "Plain Commentary."*

"What physician is so ready to heal the body as Christ, our Physician, to heal the soul! Who ever came to Him with a faithful and penitent heart and was refused? Who ever opened unto Him his diseases, and was not cured? He calleth all without exception, be they ever so diseased and laden with the burden of sin, unto Him, and promises that He will ease them of their burden and make them 'whole.'"—*Becon.*

"Come unto Me, ye fainting,
And I will give you life."

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APRIL 25.

"Only Believe."

MARK v. 35-43.

"WHILE He yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's house certain which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?[1] As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, He saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe. And He suffered no man to follow Him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. And He cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly. And when He was come in, He saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn. But when He had put them all out, He taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with Him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. And He took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha[2] cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise. And straightway the damsel arose, and walked:[3] for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. And He charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat."[4]

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[1] "Why troublest thou the Master any further?"] "These persons, who had hoped so long as life remained, now thought the time for hope was past. They had believed that Jesus could perchance heal the sick, but that He could raise the dead was beyond their belief. Compare the thoughts of the sisters of Bethany" (John xi. 21 and 32).

[2] "The word 'Talitha' is a word of affection and endearment, answering to our 'My child.'"—*Alford.*

[3] "Arose and walked."] "So," says the Venerable Bede, "a soul quickened by Divine grace not only arises from the death of sin, but walks in newness of life."

[4] "Commanded that something," etc.] "With a thoughtful care for the weakness of the girl, and to prove the reality of the miracle and completeness of the restoration. So does Jesus not only quicken the dead soul to new life, but also cares for its support and sustenance, commanding that it should be fed with the heavenly food of His own Flesh and Blood, to its perpetual strengthening and refreshing."—*Canon How.*

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APRIL 26.

The Unbelief in Nazareth.

MARK vi. 1-6.

"AND He went out from thence, and came into His own country; and His disciples follow Him. And when the Sabbath Day was come, He began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing Him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this Man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not His sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. And He could there do no mighty work,[1] save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. And He marvelled because of their unbelief.[2] And He went round about the villages, teaching."[3]

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[1] "He could there do no mighty work."] "'Not because He was powerless, but because they were faithless.' The best comment on these words is given us by our Lord Himself in His answer to the father of the lunatic child, who said, 'If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us.' Christ answers this '*If Thou canst do anything*' with '*If thou canst believe*,' adding, 'All things are possible to him that believeth.' This was, and still is, the law of Christ's blessings: He gives them to those who have faith to receive them."—*Canon How.*

[2] "He marvelled."] "He wonders at what He would have us wonder at; namely, our folly and hardness of heart, in refusing, if we do refuse, the preaching of the Gospel. God calls us, and we will not come; Christ speaks, and we will not listen. The Holy Spirit moves us, and we resist. Heaven is before us, and we care not to enter in. Hell is at hand, and we fly not to escape. God grant that we may not wonder only, but from wonder come to shame and sorrow, from sorrow to repentance, faith, and holiness of life."—*Girdlestone.*

"Without holiness no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. xii. 14).

[3] "He went round about the villages, teaching."] "How much is summed up in these few words:—what treasures of doctrine; what loving invitations; what awakening warnings; what miracles of mercy!"—*Canon How.*

"What but Thy grace can foil the tempter's power?
Who like Thyself my guide and stay can be?
Through cloud and sunshine, Lord, abide with me."

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APRIL 27.

Instructions to the Twelve Apostles.

MARK vi. 7-11.

"AND He called unto Him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; and commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: but be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.[1] And He said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha[2] in the day of judgment, than for that city."

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[1] . . . "Our Lord would have His Apostles not only free from all earthly cares, and trusting all to God, but also a pattern of self-denial and simplicity of living, that so they might the better persuade men to renounce the world and seek the true riches."—*Canon How.*

[2] "What they preached was that men should repent. And what made men refuse their preaching was that they chose not to amend their lives. And what made those who so refused more sinful than the men of Sodom and Gomorrha, in God's sight, was this, that they were preached to, not by patriarchs, but by the Apostles of Christ; not by angels, but by the Blessed Son."—*Girdlestone.*

See Matt. xi. 23. . . . "How great must be our self-condemnation, when we think of our own privileges and the use we make of them! Can we tell that London will fare better in the day of judgment than Sodom or Capernaum? Are we sure that we ourselves are better in God's sight than some miserable wretch dying on the scaffold for his crimes? The guilt will be measured by the privileges. 'Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required'" (Luke xii. 48).—*Canon How.*

"Lord, when I look to my inner self, I have good cause indeed for misgivings and despondency. Conscience repeats over and over again a sentence of condemnation, and I have nought to extenuate my guilt or palliate my sin. Whither can I flee? Where can I look but to Thee, O Lamb of God, Thou sin-bearing and sin-forgiving Saviour!"—"*The Morning Watches.*"

"Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness; according to the multitude of Thy mercies, do away mine offences" (Ps. li. 1).

"Live every day as though it were the last you had to live. Lay hold of every season to prepare for Heaven."—*St. Ambrose.*

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APRIL 28.

"Rest Awhile."

MARK vi. 30-32.

"AND the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile:[1] for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately."

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[1] "Rest awhile."] "So thoughtful is Christ for those who have laboured for Him. Blessed are they who, when their day of labour is over, hear the Master they have served saying to them, 'Come apart, and rest awhile; rest till I come and take you home for ever.'"—*Canon How.*

"'Come; come,' He saith, 'into a desert place,
Thou who art weary of life's lower sphere;
Leave its low strifes, forget its babbling noise;
Come thou with Me,—all shall be bright and clear.

Art thou bewildered by contending voices,
Sick, to thy soul, of party noise and strife?
Come; leave it all, and seek that solitude
Where thou shalt learn of Me a purer life.

When, far behind, the world's great tumult dies,
Thou shalt look back and wonder at its roar;
But its far voice shall seem to thee a dream,
Its power to vex thy holier life no more.

There shalt thou learn the secret, by a power
Mine to bestow, which heals the ills of living;
To overcome by love, to live by prayer,
To conquer man's worst evil by forgiving.'"—*Mrs. Stowe.*

"Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. xi. 28, 29).

"Well I know thy trouble,
O My servant true;
Thou art very weary,
I was weary too;
But that toil shall make thee
Some day all Mine own,
And the end of sorrow
Shall be near My throne. Amen."

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APRIL 29.

The Five Loaves and the Two Fishes.

MARK vi. 34-44.

"AND Jesus, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things. And when the day was now far spent, His disciples came unto Him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto Him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. And He commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, He looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave them to His disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided He among them all. And they did all eat, and were filled. And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men."[1]

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[1] "Of that multitude we may fitly say, that in them the promise of the Saviour, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you' (Matt. vi. 33), found a practical fulfilment. They had come taking no thought, for three days at least, of what they should eat or what they should drink, only anxious to hear the word of life, only seeking the Kingdom of Heaven; and now the meaner things, according to the word of promise, were added unto them."—*Archbishop Trench.*

"Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out" (John vi. 37).

"The more destitute we are of human aid, the more ought we to trust to that providence which God is pleased to exert in extreme necessity."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"He would rather work a wonder,
Drop from Heav'n itself their food,
Rather than that souls which trust Him
Aught should want of needful good."—*Monsell.*

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APRIL 30.

The All-seeing Eye.

MARK vi. 46-52.

"HE departed into a mountain to pray. And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and He alone on the land. And He saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night He cometh unto them,[1] walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them. But when they saw Him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: for they all saw Him, and were troubled. And immediately He talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I;[2] be not afraid. And He went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they considered not the miracle of the loaves: for their heart was hardened."

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[1] "He cometh unto them."] . . . "Thus teaching them for all their after-life, in all coming storms of temptation, that He is near them; that, however He may not be seen always by their bodily eyes, however they may seem cut off from His assistance, yet is He indeed a very present help in the needful time of trouble. Nor ought we, I think, to fail to recognise the symbolic character which this whole transaction wears. As that bark was upon those stormy seas, such is oftentimes the Church. It seems as though it had not its Lord with it, such little way does it make, so baffled is it, and tormented by the opposing storms of the world. But His Eye is on it still, He is on the mountain apart praying, ever living, an ascended Saviour, to make intercession for His people. And when at length the time of urgent need has arrived, He is suddenly with it, and that in marvellous ways past finding out; and then all that before was so laborious is easy, and the toiling rowers are anon at the haven where they would be."—*Archbishop Trench.*

[2] "Lord Jesus, in all the troubles that shall befall me, speak these comfortable words to my soul, 'It is I; be not afraid,' and then I shall be secure both from presumption and despair."—*Bishop Wilson.*

See Ps. cxxxix. 1-11.

"Thou shalt not be alone;
Have but an eye on God, as surely God will have an Eye on thee."
—*Parish Magazine.*

"Then, O my soul, since God doth love thee,
Faint not, droop not, do not fear;
For though His Heaven is high above thee,
He Himself is ever near!"—*Monsell.*

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MAY 1.

Vain Worship.

MARK vii. 5-13.

"THEN the Pharisees and Scribes asked Him, Why walk not Thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me.[1] Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men (Isa. xxix. 13). For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death (Exod. xx. 12 and xxi. 17): but ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban,[2] that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."

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[1] "To honour God with the lips, while the heart is far from Him, seems to be the great peril of all who inhabit a Christian land, especially if they happen to live in an age when religion is (so to speak) a *fashionable* thing."—*Burgon.*

[2] "Corban."] "That is, an offering dedicated to God. It is to be remarked here that the Saviour counts *supporting* our parents as the same thing as *honouring* them. Thus does our Catechism rightly interpret the fifth commandment as meaning to 'succour'—as well as to 'love' and 'honour'—our father and mother. St. Paul's words are very strong; he is speaking of widows not being supported by the Church, if they have children or relations who can support them, and says, 'If any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel'" (1 Tim. v. 8).—*Canon How.*

"Let this be the great object of your prayers to God's Almighty Spirit, that He would, for Jesus Christ's sake, make you true and sincere in serving Him. Pray to Him to make you sincere in your prayers, and watch withal, that your actions do not give the lie to your words, and prayers, and professions, and even your feelings."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

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MAY 2.

"The Heart of Man."

MARK vii. 14-23.

"WHEN He had called all the people unto Him, He said unto them, Hearken unto Me every one of you, and understand: There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. And when He was entered into the house from the people, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. And He saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And He said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within, and defile the man."[1]

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[1] "If the heart be not filled with a pure love, by a Divine change, its nature is corruption, and it can be nothing but a scene of iniquity, whatever disguises it may put on to deceive both the world and itself."—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

. . . "Our Lord knew what was in the minds of those who came to talk to Him, to ask Him questions, laying snares for Him. Before they spoke, He saw into their hearts. He knew the secret motives upon which the Scribes and Pharisees acted, although these were covered by the most pious exterior. Their hidden thoughts were discovered to them. . . . He Who knew what was in man in the days of His flesh: He Who judged man then, knows and weighs man *now* in heaven; even the man Christ Jesus. . . . He Who reigns in heaven and in earth, to Whom all power is given, to Whom every knee shall bow, is God and man too. . . . He looks into our hearts; He knows what is true and what is false there, what is sound and what is corrupt. . . . We are searched and tested by His infallible insight. 'Perfect God and Perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and human flesh subsisting.' . . . What a motive ought this to be to us to examine ourselves, to be true to ourselves, not to tamper with our own consciences, not to cloak our sin, not to dissemble and walk in crooked ways! . . . We cannot deceive Him: He knew what was in man when He was on earth; He knows what is in man now."—*Mozley's "University Sermons."*

"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do" (Heb. iv. 13).

"Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me" (Ps. li. 10).

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MAY 3.

The Syrophenician Woman.

MARK vii. 24-30.

"AND from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but He could not be hid. For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet. The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her daughter. But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs. And she answered and said unto Him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. And He said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed."[1]

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[1] . . . "What was the very point which so recommended her to Christ's special blessing? Not simply her perseverance in prayer, but her taking reproof and hard words as she did. Which of us would not be ready with an angry answer, or at least with an angry bitter thought, if we came to ask a favour of another, and he sent us away telling us we were no better than dogs? But she was not at all angry. Why? because she was so very humble: she felt that it was no more than she deserved; and this (mark it well) was the very thing which brought down the blessing she asked. For He did not say only, 'Great is thy faith' (Matt. xv. 28), but He added, 'For this saying go thy way, the devil is gone out of thy daughter.' She prayed, and He seemed not to hear; . . . but the moment she took the affront patiently, the Lord's gracious word was spoken. Would you wish God to hear your prayers when you say them this very night? Take care to be patient, indulge no bitter thoughts, should any one offend you between this and then. The way to be forgiven and heard is, not merely to call yourself a miserable sinner before God, but knowing yourself to be such, not to be put out when others treat you as such."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

"Blessed are the meek" (Matt. v. 5).

"Fairest and best adorned is she
Whose clothing is humility."—*J. Montgomery.*

"Persevere against discouragements."—*Bishop Middleton.*

. . . "Believe that all God's dealings with you are dealings of love, and let your faith in His love lead you to love your brethren, to be kindly-affectioned, forgiving, gentle, for Christ's sake."—*Rev. W. Benham.*

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MAY 4.

Cure of the Deaf and Dumb.

MARK vii. 31-37.

"DEPARTING from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, He came unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis. And they bring unto Him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech Him to put His hand upon him. And He took him aside[1] from the multitude, and put His fingers into his ears, and He spit, and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, He sighed,[2] and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. And He charged them that they should tell no man: but the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; and were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak."

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[1] "He took him aside."] "As with the blind man afterwards (viii. 23). His purpose was, that apart from the din and tumult and interruption of the crowd, in solitude and silence, the man might be the better able to receive deep and lasting impressions; even as the same Lord does now oftentimes lead a soul apart, sets it in the solitude of a sick chamber, or in loneliness of spirit, or takes away from it earthly companions and friends, when He would speak with it and heal it."—*Archbishop Trench.*

[2] "He sighed."] "Why did He sigh? Was that sigh an indication that the Lord was about to confer an awful power, a power which might be awfully abused, as it might also be made the medium of infinite good? Was it equivalent to saying, 'Son of man, hitherto shut out from the power of sinning with the lips, upon the brink of what an awful responsibility art thou standing? This giving thee an articulate tongue, to use or abuse, is almost like endowing thee with a soul, which, while it has a capacity of heavenly bliss, is also susceptible of being degraded to the lowest hell. Was this the Saviour's mind when He sighed? It may be so; for indeed the tongue, being the faculty by which reason is exercised, is so closely allied with the reason, that to give articulate speech is akin to endowing with reason. And so, in view of this intimate association, it is written, 'Death and life' (spiritual death and life) 'are in the power of the tongue.' And by a greater than Solomon it was said, '*By thy words thou shalt be justified; and by thy words thou shalt be condemned*'" (Matt. xii. 37).—*Goulburn's "Idle Word."*

See also James i. 26.

"With the sweet charity of speech,
Give words that heal and words that teach."

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MAY 5.

The Compassion of Jesus.

MARK viii. 1-9.

"IN those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples unto Him, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude,[1] because they have now been with Me three days,[2] and have nothing to eat: and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. And His disciples answered Him, From whence can a man satisfy these men with bread here in the wilderness? And He asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. And He commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and He took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to His disciples to set before them; and they did set them before the people. And they had a few small fishes: and He blessed, and commanded to set them also before them. So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets. And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and He sent them away."

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[1] "How comforting to know that Jesus feels compassion for human wants and weakness! His compassion is not lessened because He now sitteth on the Right Hand of God."

[2] "Three days."] "May not this imply an earnest craving in some at least of this great multitude for spiritual food, so that in their eagerness to feed their souls, they forgot their bodily needs? But Jesus did not forget. They sought first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and that which was needful for the body was added unto them."—*Canon How.*

"He who hath tasted and hath seen
How gracious is the Lord;
Whose hungry soul has fed upon
The manna of His Word:
Whose desolate and lonely heart,
Hath brightened with the glow
Of that approving smile of Love
The pardoned only know:—

He would not change one hour of peace,
For all the world could give;
Nor deem that it were life at all
Without his God to live."—*Monsell.*

"I am the bread of life."

"The bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

"Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John vi.).

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MAY 6.

Signs and Wonders.

MARK viii. 11-13.

"THE Pharisees came forth, and began to question with Him, seeking of Him a sign from heaven, tempting Him. And He sighed deeply in His spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. And He left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side."[1]

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[1] "Let us beware of the doctrine of these Pharisees, of their hardened unbelief, and of the specious pleas they urged to justify themselves before Christ. No excuse can be more vain than to say that we would believe better if we had signs more plain; than to imagine we should better obey in some circumstances of more forcible conviction than those which we here enjoy. These thoughts are a kind of leaven, which, if we once admit it into our hearts, will soon corrupt the whole practice of our lives. . . . Own that you have signs clear enough, and motives strong enough. And confess that what is wanting is in your own inclination; not on the part of God, but in yourselves."—*Girdlestone.*

"The simple trust, that can confide
All troubles to the Lord,
And ask for nothing else beside
The warrant of His Word:

That no desire beyond it knows,
No 'sign or wonder' craves,
This is the trust that peace bestows,
And this the Faith that saves.

. . . . . .

Thus, ever on through life we find
To trust, O Lord! is best;
Who 'serve Thee with a quiet mind,'
Find in Thy service rest.

Their outward troubles may not cease,
But this their joy shall be,
Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace
Whose mind is stayed on Thee."—*Monsell.*

"What is the use of saying we believe in a Heavenly Father, if we will not trust Him?"—*Rev. Charles Kingsley.*

"Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him" (Job xiii. 15).

"Thou alone knowest what is best for us: let me never dispute Thy wisdom or Thy goodness."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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MAY 7.

Spiritual Blindness.

MARK viii. 14-21.

"NOW the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. And He charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have no bread. And when Jesus knew it, He saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto Him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. And He said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?"[1]

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[1] "How is it that ye do not understand?"] "If our hearts were intent on learning it, our minds would be enlightened by the heavenly wisdom which shines throughout the book of the revelation of God. Many things there are in it difficult, many things which we must own to be mysterious. Yet many things there are also which it is our plain duty to know; many which it is a sin not to understand. Let no one dare plead ignorance for neglect of duty, when the ignorance itself is sinful. Let no one by way of excuse say he knows no better, when he might have known better, but for his own fault. . . . Let us, whilst it is called to-day, turn ever to the best account we can the light we have the happiness to enjoy; and above all other knowledge, let us study ever most earnestly to know and to do the things that belong unto salvation."—*Girdlestone.*

"They who have their minds fixed on earthly things are utterly blind as to heavenly things, though they be never so plainly set before them."—*Beza.*

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace:
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.

Blind unbelief is sure to err,
And scan His work in vain;
God is His own interpreter,
And He will make it plain."

"O Thou Who formest the light, and bringest back the morning, causing Thy sun to rise on the evil and on the good: scatter the darkness of our ignorance by the knowledge of Thy truth; that in Thy light we may see light; and lift up the light of Thy countenance upon us, the light of grace here, and the light of glory hereafter."—*Bishop Andrewes' "Devotions."*

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MAY 8.

Sight Restored.

MARK viii. 22-26.

"AND He cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto Him, and besought Him to touch him. And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town;[1] and when He had spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that He put His hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And He sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town."[2]

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[1] "Led him out."] "How beautiful is this picture of Jesus leading the blind man out of the town by the hand! So does He, Who is the light of the world, by the merciful dealings of His providence, lead many a one blind in spirit aside from the noise and care and distraction of the world, that He may bestow upon him spiritual sight, and teach him to see the things which are not seen."

[2] Our Lord gave this command, "doubtless as in other cases, to avoid the thronging of the curious and idle."—*Canon How.*

"O Jesu, Lord of light and grace,
Thou brightness of the Father's face,
Thou fountain of eternal light,
Whose beams disperse the shades of night;

Come, Holy Sun, of heavenly love,
Come in Thy radiance from above,
And to our inward hearts convey
The Holy Spirit's cloudless ray.

May faith, deep rooted in the soul,
Subdue our flesh, our minds control;
May guile depart, and discord cease,
And all within be joy and peace.

O hallowed thus be every day;
Let meekness be our morning ray,
Our faith like noontide splendour glow,
Our souls the twilight never know."

"O Sun of Righteousness, that camest to bring light into the world by Thy word and example, and the illumination of Thy Holy Spirit, let Thy Spirit lead us, Thine example guide us, and Thy Word teach us as our portion for ever!"—*Lord Hatton.*

"Let the road be long and dreary,
And its ending out of sight;
Foot it bravely, strong or weary,
Trust in God, and do the right.

Some will hate thee, some will love thee,
Some will flatter, some will slight;
Cease from man and look above thee,
Trust in God, and do the right.

Simple rule, and safest guiding,
Inward peace and inward light;
Star upon our path abiding,
Trust in God, and do the right."—*N. Macleod.*

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MAY 9.

The Faith and Confession of St. Peter.

MARK viii. 27-30.

"AND Jesus went out, and His disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi: and by the way He asked His disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the Prophets. And He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto Him, Thou art the Christ.[1] And He charged them that they should tell no man of Him."

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[1] "St. Peter's confession amounts to a full acknowledgment of the great mystery of godliness, God manifest in the flesh to destroy the works of the devil; and the truth of this faith is the rock on which Christ promises to build His Church."—*Bishop Horsley.*

"The Lord's Prayer and the Apostles' Creed, which do seal up our hearts unto the service and love of God, are daily to be repeated every morning."—*St. Ambrose.*

"In the Creed, the Faith is given to Christians to hold in few words, that by believing they may be made subject unto God; having been made subject, may live rightly; by living rightly, may cleanse their hearts; with a cleansed heart, may understand what they believe. . . . Call thy Faith to mind continually, look into thyself, let the Creed be as it were a mirror unto thee. Therein see thyself, whether thou dost believe all which thou professest to believe, and so rejoice day by day in thy Faith. Let it be thy wealth—let it be, in a sort, the daily clothing of thy soul; for this Faith is at once a garment and a breastplate—a garment against shame, a breastplate against adversity. But when we shall have arrived at that place where we shall reign, no need will there then be to say the Creed. We shall see God. God Himself will be our Vision; the Vision of God will be the reward of our present Faith."—*St. Augustine.*

"Faith, Hope, and Charity—these three
Shall be with us alway—
Shall be to us a fire by night,
A guiding cloud by day.

By Faith, our Love is cherish'd—
By Faith, our Hope we see.
We'll live in Hope, we'll live by Faith,
And Love our life shall be."—*Parish Magazine.*

"Lord, increase my Faith, and in this Thy Truth, stablish, strengthen, settle me."

"Make me to love Thee more, and to serve Thee better!"

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MAY 10.

The Rebuke of St. Peter.

MARK viii. 31-33.

"AND He began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and Scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He spake that saying openly. And Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him. But when He had turned about and looked on His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind Me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men."[1]

---

[1] "The words of Peter were a snare and suggestion of Satan, tempting the devoted Saviour to avoid the sufferings and death by which it was God's will that we should be healed. Satan it is, our adversary the devil, who continually to us also holds out the inconvenience and irksomeness of obedience. He it is who, on the other hand, suggests the pleasure of sin, its ease, its pretended safety."—*Girdlestone.*

"Our Lord has left this pointed reproof of one of the dearest of His followers for ever upon record, that no future believer may indulge a hope that he shall be held guiltless where St. Peter was rebuked; that if, from worldly considerations, you be led to compromise the honour of God, to prefer in your own case, or to recommend in the case of others, the soft and easy path of safety in preference to the sterner and more rugged walk of duty, whatever be the alleged or the real motive which dictates such a choice, you are from that moment 'an offence,' an adversary to Him Whom you profess to follow."—*Rev. H. Blunt.*

"'Those whose intentions towards us are the best,' says Stier, 'are the most dangerous to us when their intentions are merely human.' How often, alas! are a man's real foes they of his own household; his friends, who love him best, become in their worldliness his worst enemies. They drag him down from heights of self-sacrifice to the vulgar, the conventional, the comfortable."—*Farrar.*

"'Hinder me not,' still to the last,
The faithful heart will say;
'I must be striving, pressing on,
And work while it is day.'"—*Anon.*

. . . "How much shrinking from the Cross of Christ does the Spirit see to rebuke in us, how much hanging upon the world and compromise with it is still remaining within us! How often must the Saviour still cry to our consciences —'Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you! (John xv. 14)— but not My friends if ye do what *ye* will, and what the world requires!'"—*Stier.*

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MAY 11.

The Cross.

MARK viii. 34-38.

"AND when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.[1] For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy Angels."

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[1] "Do we shrink from the cross? Let us then feel that our state requires it; nor let us be cast down when the hand of God lies heavily upon us. The violence of the remedies administered by the Great Physician of our souls, may show us how virulent is the disease. Our misery and God's mercy appear in this, that notwithstanding our all but desperate condition, He undertakes our cure. From our very crosses, then, let there spring up a fountain of love, of confidence, of consolation. . . . Unworthy as I am, let me look on my crucified Master, and bow the head in silence and in shame. Lord! make me to love Thee; and the cross will be sweet. Then, if I am still called to endure suffering, I shall at least sustain it with a willing spirit."—*Fénelon.*

"'Take up thy cross,' the Saviour said,
'If thou wouldst My disciple be;
Deny thyself, the world forsake,
And humbly follow after Me.'

Take up thy cross; let not its weight
Fill thy weak spirit with alarm;
His strength shall bear thy spirit up,
And brace thy heart, and nerve thine arm.

Take up thy cross, nor heed the shame,
Nor let thy foolish heart rebel;
Thy Lord for thee the cross endured,
To save thy soul from death and hell.

Take up thy cross then in His strength,
And calmly every danger brave;
'Twill guide thee to a better home,
And lead to victory o'er the grave.

Take up thy cross, and follow Christ,
Nor think till death to lay it down;
For only he who bears the cross
May hope to wear the glorious crown."

"Let no one despair of the Mercy of God, because it is infinitely greater than our misery."—*St. Augustine.*

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MAY 12.

The New Kingdom.

MARK ix. 1.

"AND He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."[1]

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[1] "If, as all Scripture shows, 'the kingdom of the Son of Man' be understood in a sense primarily spiritual, then there can be no difficulty in understanding this prophecy in the sense that, ere all of them passed away, the foundations of that kingdom should have been established for ever in the abolition of the old and the establishment of the new dispensation. Three of them were immediately to see Him transfigured; all but one were to be witnesses of His resurrection; one at least—the 'beloved disciple,' was to survive that capture of Jerusalem and destruction of the Temple which were to render impossible any literal fulfilment of the Mosaic Law. And the prophecy may have a deeper meaning yet than these—meanings still more real because they are still more wholly spiritual. 'If we wish not to fear death,' says St. Ambrose, 'let us stand where Christ is: Christ is your life; He is the very life which cannot die.'"—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"'We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a Voice to Him from the excellent glory, 'This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.' And this voice which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with Him in the holy mount' (2 Pet. i. 16-18). This testimony to the Transfiguration, which was an earnest of Christ's second coming in glory, was an answer to the false teachers who denied that it would ever take place."—*Rev. A. W. Thorold.*

"And faithful hearts are raised on high
By this great vision's mystery,
For which in joyful strains we raise
The voice of prayer, the hymn of praise."

. . . "Christ had spoken of the Cross, of sacrificing life itself for Him, and of His Coming to judgment. The natural heart would shrink from these hard sayings. Therefore He would encourage His disciples by a promise, saying as it were, Are ye afraid of that death I have spoken of? Do ye tremble at the sacrifice? Does the future Coming to judgment seem too distant to support you in the nearer trials? Well then, I tell you that some of you shall not have to meet these trials until they have actually *seen* in a vision My glorious Coming in My kingdom. I will grant them a sight of that glory to cheer and support them when they are called not to the crown but to the cross."—*Canon How.*

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MAY 13.

The Glorious Vision.

MARK ix. 2-9.

"AND after six days Jesus taketh with Him Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves, and He was transfigured before them. And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them. And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here:[1] and let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a Voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is My beloved Son: hear Him. And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only[2] with themselves. And as they came down from the mountain, He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen from the dead."

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[1] "Master, it is good for us to be here."] "Yes; for a little space, but not always. We must not spend our lives 'gazing up into heaven;' we have work to do for Christ before He comes again. Yet the brightness of moments of heavenly contemplation should shine upon our daily toil, and gild our darkest hours. Another beautiful thought upon this passage is given us by an ancient writer. 'If the contemplation of Christ's glorified manhood so filled the Apostle with joy that he was unwilling to be parted from it, how shall it fare with them who attain to the contemplation of His glorious Godhead? And if it was so good a thing to dwell with two of His saints, how good then to come to the heavenly Jerusalem, to the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to these, not seen through a glass darkly, but face to face?'"—*St. Anselm, quoted by Archbishop Trench.*

[2] "Jesus only."] "This would teach them that the Law and the Prophets had done their work and ended in Christ. Moses and Elijah belonged to the older covenant. That was to give place to the new. They pass out of sight. 'Jesus only' remains."—*Canon How.*

"Lord Jesus, give us grace
On earth to love Thee more,
In heaven to see Thy Face,
And with Thy Saints adore. Amen."

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MAY 14.

The Coming of Elias.

MARK ix. 11-13.

"AND they asked Him, saying, Why say the Scribes that Elias must first come?[1] And He answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of Man, that He must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him."

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[1] "The prophecy of Malachi (iv. 5) as to the coming of Elijah before the coming of Christ was much dwelt upon by the Jews. The three Apostles had just beheld the form of Elijah in the Transfiguration, but they had also witnessed his disappearance in the cloud of light. This reminded them of the prophecy, but also perplexed them much. If this were all they were to see of Elijah, what could the prophecy mean? And were the Scribes right in understanding it literally?"—*Canon How.*

"Our Saviour has interpreted this Elias to be John the Baptist" (Matt. xi. 13, 14; xvii. 12, 13).—*Wm. Lowth.*

"As Elijah was the severe rebuker of sin, in both king and people, in his generation, so was St. John the Baptist. Both too were stern, self-denying men. The expression 'if ye will receive it' (Matt. xi. 14) appears to mean, if ye will understand it aright; not in the letter, as some do, but in its true spiritual application to these present times."—*Canon How.*

"All things then which the Scriptures had said beforehand of Christ's coming were fulfilled in the dispensation of the Gospel. All things which are set down as hereafter to happen, will in like manner be fulfilled, when He shall come again to judgment. This is the chief practical use we should make of prophecy already accomplished. We should take it as an earnest of the certainty of what has yet to take effect. Surely as John the Baptist preached, and was followed by the manifestation of Jesus of Nazareth, so surely will the first coming of our Lord to save the world, be followed by His second coming to judge the quick and the dead."—*Girdlestone.*

"Whoso confesseth and *forsaketh* his sins, shall have mercy" (Prov. xxviii. 13).

"'Tis not enough to say
We're sorry and repent,
And yet go on from day to day
Just as we always went.
Repentance is to leave
The sin we loved before,
And show that we in earnest grieve
By doing so no more."

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MAY 15.

The Need of Faith.

MARK ix. 14-23.

"WHEN He came to His disciples, He saw a great multitude about them, and the Scribes questioning with them. And straightway all the people, when they beheld Him, were greatly amazed, and running to Him saluted Him. And He asked the Scribes, What question ye with them? And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit; and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not. He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto Me. And they brought him unto Him: and when he saw Him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. And He asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. And ofttimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us, and help us. Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth."[1]

---

[1] "It is well said that our Lord's conversation with the father of the lunatic boy is 'a school of faith.'"—*Lange, quoted by Canon How.*

"The father had said, 'If Thou canst do anything.' Jesus takes up his words, and says, 'If thou canst believe.' It is as much as to say, 'The doubt lies not in Me but in thee. It is not My power, but thy faith, which thou shouldest question.' Man's faith was the measure of Christ's power to do."—*Canon How.*

"All things are possible to him that believeth."] "What a promise to faith! What a reproof to me, who profess to believe!"—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

"Yes, Lord; and therefore I beg that faith of Him to Whom all things are possible, that I may be able to discover, to avoid, to resist, and to root out whatever is evil in me. O Jesus, obtain this grace for Thy otherwise helpless creature."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"God does not demand impossibilities; do what you can, pray for what you cannot do."—*St. Augustine.*

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Prayer and Fasting.

MARK ix. 24-29.

"AND straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe;[1] help Thou mine unbelief. When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee,[2] come out of him, and enter no more into him. And the spirit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. And when He was come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast him out? And He said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting."[3]

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[1] "This short cry has been of priceless value to thousands of imperfect Christians, who, longing after faith, have yet seen their own lack of faith. It is very comforting to know that it was accepted by Christ, and won its petition. Weak faith is not really unbelief, though it seems so in comparison with the faith we long for. It is the smoking flax which Christ will not quench, but will fan into a bright flame."

[2] "I charge thee."] "See with what authority Christ speaks. There is a force to be put on the word 'I.' 'I—not like My disciples, who had not power to command—but *I*, the Son of God, the conqueror of your prince and chief, the destroyer of your power,—I charge thee."

[3] "By prayer and fasting."] "St. Matthew (xvii. 21) gives our Lord's answer more fully. His first words are, 'Because of your unbelief.' In this, the latter part of His answer, He takes the Apostles yet farther back, namely, to the cause of their want of faith. They lacked faith, because they had been slack in those spiritual exercises which keep faith bright and strong. . . . We may note that 'prayer and fasting' are as blessed in gaining the Holy Spirit as they are in expelling the evil one" (*See* Acts xiii. 3 and xiv. 23).—*Canon How.*

"In prayer and fasting let us strive
To keep our bodies down,
To save our precious souls alive,
And win a glorious crown."—*Monsell.*

. . . "The faith which shall be effectual . . . must be a faith exercised in prayer, that has not relaxed itself by an habitual compliance with the demands of the lower nature, but often girt itself up to an austerer rule, to rigour and self-denial."—*Trench "On the Miracles."*

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MAY 17.

Passing through Galilee.

MARK ix. 30-32.

"AND they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and He would not that any man should know it.[1] For He taught His disciples, and said unto them, The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day. But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him."[2]

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[1] "This was a private journey, during which our Lord took pains to avoid the crowds who usually followed Him, and to have much quiet intercourse with His disciples. . . . Thus the object of this tour was to prepare the minds of His followers for the great events which were so little according to their expectations, and which they found it so hard to understand."—*Canon How.*

[2] "In the cross is life, in the cross is health, in the cross is protection from every enemy: from the cross are derived heavenly meekness, true fortitude, the joys of the Spirit, the conquest of self, the perfection of holiness. There is no redemption, no foundation for the hope of the Divine life, but in the cross. Take up thy cross, therefore, and follow Jesus in the path that leads to everlasting peace. He hath gone before, bearing that cross upon which He died for thee, that thou mightest follow, patiently bearing thy own cross, and upon that die to thyself for Him; and if we die with Him, we shall also live with Him: 'If we are partakers of His sufferings, we shall be partakers also of His glory.'"—*Thomas à Kempis.*

"Suffer not our feet to stumble,
Suffer not our steps to slide,
Keep us lowly, keep us humble,
And be Thou Thyself our Guide."

"Jesus spake by His actions, calling us to follow His steps."—*Rev. R. M. Benson.*

. . . "The principle of His life was to do God's will. Now if our Master's object was always this, ours too should be the same. We should aim in everything at doing God's will in our work. We should not set about anything merely for occupation—for pastime—or for self-satisfaction—but with the simple and the single purpose of doing the will of our God. And this is the case in all departments, ranks, and classes. . . . God sends us into the world to do a work—to do something for Him. . . . It was His principle of life to 'finish the work' He had set before Him. So too we ought not to take it up and soon grow cold about it: but we should begin with a true object and go on with a firm purpose—not being content till we have 'finished' it."—*Rev. G. F. Prescott.*

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MAY 18.

"The Greatest."

MARK ix. 33-37.

"AND He came to Capernaum: and being in the house He asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And He sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when He had taken him in His arms, He said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My Name, receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me."[1]

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[1] "Woe be to them, therefore, who in the pride of human attainments, disdain the spontaneous and meek humility of little children; for the low gate of the Kingdom of Heaven will not give them entrance."

"Far more acceptable to God is he that thinketh of the greatness of his own sins and the smallness of his virtues, and how far he is from the perfection of Saints, than he who disputeth of their greatness or littleness."—"*The Imitation of Christ.*"

"They only are truly great who humble themselves. Such is the law of Christ. What is my law? what is my endeavour? what is my practice?"—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

"He knew their hearts, their love He knew,
Their ardent zeal to dare, and do;
It was not these He sought;
But what He wanted was the calm
And child-like waitings, which embalm
All that to God is brought.
No worldly dream of human power
Must come to cloud that glorious hour,
Or mar the path they trod."—*Monsell.*

"Blessed is the calamity that makes us humble!"—*S. T. Coleridge.*

"The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart; and will save such as be of an humble spirit" (Ps. xxxiv. 11).

"Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. iii. 2).

"O let my name be found written in the Lamb's Book of Life at the great day!"—*Bishop Wilson.*

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MAY 19.

Against Party-Spirit.

MARK ix. 38-42.

"AND John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is on our part.[1] For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My Name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in Me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea."

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[1] . . . "The man of whom St. John spoke had in no way opposed himself either to Christ or to the disciples. We cannot think our Lord would speak thus favourably of any one whose words or actions were the result of self-will, or neglect of Christ's commands, or contempt of authority, however much they might be spoken or done in Christ's Name. Moreover the very words condemn at once all who are actuated by party-spirit, enmity, or uncharitableness. We should compare this saying with the opposite one, used by our Lord when He was accused of casting out devils by the power of the devil: 'He that is not with Me is against Me' (Matt. xii. 30). The two sayings taken together show that all men must range themselves on one side or the other—with Christ, or against Him. There is no neutral ground."—*Canon How.*

"St. John and St. Paul were both equally devoted to the cause and Person of our Lord, yet no two men ever existed who manifested this devotion in shapes more different. . . . Let us not conceive of all genuine religion as moving in one groove of feeling and practice, and refuse to acknowledge any man as a Christian, because he does not run upon our own particular groove." —*Goulburn's "Personal Religion."*

"Beware lest thou shouldst ever shroud
By word or thought or deed of thine,
The light divine."—*A. E. Hamilton.*

"O God, dispose the hearts of those with whom we have to do to peace and justice."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"O if but half the breath that's spent
To vex the weak, and blame the wrong,
Found thus in Faith and Prayer its vent,
How glad would be the Church's song!"—*Monsell.*

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MAY 20.

The Spirit of Self-discipline.

MARK ix. 43-50.

"IF thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another."[1]

---

[1] "Let your character as a Christian be no more tame, feeble, impotent; but let it be such a decided manifestation of self-denial, of energy, of truthfulness, as shall be a seasoning salt in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Halt no more between two opinions. If the Lord be God, follow Him; and in following Him, condemn the world, that thou mayest not be condemned with it. Yet while your example and influence is condemnatory of worldly ways, let your sympathies be large and liberal. 'Give no offence.' 'Follow peace with all men.' Practically admit that other minds may run in a groove of sentiment very different from your own, and yet converge towards the same central truth. Walk more closely with God, and by consequence more at variance with the world, more in union with all those who seek and worship God, whether they are now members of the Church militant or triumphant."—*Goulburn's "Occasional Sermons."*

"The Christian will be severe to self, forbearing to others."—*Canon How.*

"Give me, O Lord, a wise, a sober, a serious, a religious heart."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Have peace one with another."] "In the thirty-fourth verse of this chapter we are told that the disciples had been disputing among themselves which should be the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven. It was out of that dispute that the present discourse had arisen. And our Saviour comes back to that in these concluding words. . . . There can be no real religion well-pleasing to God unless we love one another. . . . Blessed are they who so teach, for they shall be greatest in the kingdom of Heaven."—*Rev. W. Benham.*

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The Question of the Pharisees.

MARK x. 2-12.

"THE Pharisees came to Him, and asked Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting Him. And He answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh (Gen. ii. 24). What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.[1] And in the house His disciples asked Him again of the same matter. And He saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery."

---

[1] "It has been thought that the Pharisees chose the question of divorce, knowing our Lord's strict teaching on the subject, and hoping to induce Him to say that which would bring down upon Him the wrath of the adulterous Herod, in whose province our Lord now was. Galilee and Peræa formed one province, under Herod Antipas, and his treatment of St. John the Baptist might have led the Pharisees to hope to get rid of our Lord in a similar manner. At all events, the question was a very crafty one, for the Jews were divided into two parties upon it, and our Lord's answer was sure to displease the one or the other."—*Canon How.*

"The New Testament lies hid in the Old; the Old Testament is unfolded in the New."

See 1 John iii. 4. "Sin is not an accident, nor a misfortune, as human language so often describes it, but a real disobedience to God."

"It is God's will for us not only that we should be delivered from the punishment of sin in the next world, but also from the power of it in this. God will have us holy."

See 2 Peter ii. 10. "Licentiousness and pride are here named as sins especially hateful to God."—*Rev. A. W. Thorold.*

"Enable me, blessed Jesus, I beseech Thee, to lay aside the weight of fleshly lusts, and exchange my worldly affections and desires for those of Thee and heaven."—*St. Augustine.*

"Lord, make us holy, even as Thou art holy!"

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Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.

MARK x. 13-16.

"AND they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms,[1] put His hands upon them, and blessed them."

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[1] "I suppose there is no mother in Christendom whose heart would not bound for joy to think that her child had been placed in the arms of Jesus, and solemnly blessed by Him. But have not mothers nowadays, though our Lord is no longer upon earth, the opportunity of securing for their children the very same blessing? The ministers of our Lord, in administering Holy Baptism, act in His Name and by His commission. They are, as it were, His mouth and His hands; He does by them as His instruments what we see them doing. And not only does our Lord Himself, though He is no longer seen among men, act by His ministers, but we live under a more blessed and glorious state of things than those parents in the Gospels did, who brought their children to Jesus. The Holy Ghost came down upon the Christian Church on the day of Pentecost, and has ever since filled all its ministrations with grace, and life, and blessing. And as little infants cannot possibly put a bar in the way of His operations by unbelief and impenitence, as older people may and do, we assuredly believe that in Baptism they are not only dedicated to God, but also blessed with the gift of His Spirit. Let us bless God for having given us in our early life this great advantage; so that His grace got (if I may say so) the start of our evil, and stirred us and biassed us towards good, before the natural selfishness of our hearts could manifest itself in action."—*Goulburn's "Child Samuel."*

"E'en now around the Font,
Unseen by mortal eye,
Bright ministering angels watch
The wondrous mystery.

And all the host of Heaven
Rejoice before the Lord,
To see a child of fallen man,
A child of God restored."

"O Lord, Who of Thine infinite goodness towards me, didst vouchsafe that I should be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, . . . being thereby made a member of Christ, and an heir of eternal life, . . . most humbly do I beseech Thee to pardon all former breaches of my solemn promise, and so to endue me with Thy Holy Spirit, that henceforth I may walk in newness of life; . . . and as I have had my part in the first regeneration, so may I, at the Last Day, have my part in the second and great regeneration of the world, to live and reign with Thee for ever, through the merits of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."
—*Bishop Cosin.*

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MAY 23.

The Crucial Test.

MARK x. 17-22.

"AND when He was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? there is none good but One, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother (Exod. xx.). And He answered and said unto Him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest:[1] go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross,[2] and follow Me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved:[3] for he had great possessions."

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[1] "One thing thou lackest."] "Are we then to suppose that our Lord accepts the young man's account of his own obedience as true? Certainly not. It is as though He said, 'Thou shalt now be proved. Thou hast asked Me what good thing thou shalt do to have eternal life. And I have told thee to keep God's law. This thou sayest thou hast done. Then thou art willing to do it still. Let thy obedience be put to the proof. God's law says, "Thou shalt have none other gods but Me." Hast thou no other God? Hast thou not made a god of thy riches? Is not covetousness idolatry? Go and cast down this idol, and then thou mayest claim to obey at least one commandment.'"

[2] "Take up the cross."] . . . "The young man's 'cross' would be voluntary poverty; but it was too heavy for him to lift. He could not carry it, for he was weighed down by his gold."

[3] He "went away grieved."] "His self-righteousness was at last brought home to him. He shrank from the test. He could keep the law perhaps in the letter. The spirit was too hard for him. He could not pluck out the right eye and cut off the right hand."—*Canon How.*

"May I always resign my will and my desires to Him Who knows what is good for us, better than we ourselves do."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"I had found the precious pearl, which, selling all that I had, I ought to have bought, and I hesitated."—*St. Augustine.*

"Search, try, O God, my thoughts and heart,
If mischief lurks in any part;
Correct me when I go astray,
And guide me in Thy perfect way."

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MAY 24.

The Danger of Riches.

MARK x. 23-27.

"AND Jesus looked round about, and saith unto His disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God![1] And the disciples were astonished at His words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible."

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[1] "Our Lord did not mean to say that a rich man cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; but He said it was hard. Often—and thank God for it!—we find wealthy people very humble, very self-denying, very thoughtful and tender towards others; ay, and very holy in thought and life. But this is in spite of their riches, by the special grace of God, and is attained only by continual watching and fervent prayer."

"Let riches humble you with a sense of the responsibility of your stewardship. Let poverty make you realize more vividly the preciousness of your heavenly inheritance. Let losses and reverses convince you of the gain of living to Christ."—*Prescott's "Hindrances to Spiritual Life."*

"Bless God, ye that have riches, if He has given you grace and power to give them with a liberal hand and cheerful heart, without which they will be the occasion of certain ruin!"—*Bishop Wilson.*

"How rich is poverty's scant hoard
When God hath blessed its lot!
How poor the heaps that wealth has stored
If He hath blessed them not!"—*Barton.*

"The immoderate love—not, the possession—of wealth is a sin. . . . '*The love of money*,' saith St. Paul, '*is the root of all evil*.' It first begets, and then nurses, sin. . . . He that is over-eager in the pursuit of wealth will soon be lukewarm in God's service. He makes gold his idol and the object of his love and worship, and places in it all his trust. He may not admit this, but his actions prove it."—"*The Hidden Life.*"

"We give Thee but Thine own
Whate'er the gift may be:
All that we have is Thine alone,
A trust, O Lord, from Thee."

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MAY 25.

The Reply to St. Peter.

MARK x. 28-31.

"THEN Peter began to say unto Him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily, I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My sake, and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last first."[1]

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[1] "The answer of Jesus was at once a magnificent encouragement and a solemn warning. The encouragement was that there was no instance of self-sacrifice which would not, even in this world, and even in the midst of persecutions, receive its hundredfold increase in the harvest of spiritual blessings, and would in the world to come be rewarded by the infinite recompense of eternal life; the warning was that familiar one which they had heard before, that many of the first should be last, and the last first. And to impress upon them still more fully and deeply that the kingdom of heaven is not a matter of mercenary calculation or exact equivalent—that there could be no bargaining with the Heavenly Householder—that before the eye of God's clearer and more penetrating judgment Gentiles might be admitted before Jews, and Publicans before Pharisees, and young converts before aged Apostles—He told them the memorable parable of the 'Labourers in the Vineyard.' That parable, amid its other lessons, involved the truth, that while all who serve God should not be defrauded of their just, and full, and rich reward, there could be in heaven no murmuring, no envyings, no jealous comparison of respective services, no base strugglings for precedency, no miserable disputings as to who had performed the maximum of service or the minimum of grace."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Oh, by Thy love and anguish, Lord,
And by Thy life laid down,
Grant that we fall not from Thy grace,
Nor cast away our crown. Amen."

It has been asked:—"What was that *'all'* which the Apostles forsook? . . . It was their *all*, and therefore, though it might have been but a few boats and nets, it was much. And the forsaking consists not in the more or less that is forsaken, but in the spirit in which it is left. . . . These Apostles might have left little when they left their possessions, but they left much when they left their desires."—*Trench "On the Parables."*

"Surrender we all to God, and we shall find all in God."—*"The Hidden Life."*

"Whatever, Lord, we lend to Thee
Repaid a thousandfold will be."

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MAY 26.

Going up to Jerusalem.

MARK x. 32-34.

"AND they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And He took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto Him, saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the Scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him: and the third day He shall rise again."[1]

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[1] "This was the third great announcement of our Lord's approaching suffering."—*Canon How.*

"From His Birth to His Death, He never ceased to fulfil the painful offices of a Saviour with the same zeal. He never grew remiss. He ever laboured, ever suffered, until the moment when He said, 'It is finished,' and that was the moment when He gave up His Soul. This is the term thou must fix for thy perseverance, if thou desirest to attain the crown."—*Avrillon.*

"There are but too many who would desire to follow and imitate Jesus Christ in glory and prosperity, and not in humiliation and suffering; who would desire to reign but not to combat with Him."—*St. Bon.*

"The cross our Master bore for us, for Him we fain would bear,
But mortal strength to weakness turns, and courage to despair;
Then mercy to our failings, Lord, our sinking faith renew,
And when Thy sorrows visit us, oh, send Thy patience too!"
—*Bishop Heber.*

"God has only one way of bringing all to Himself; namely, by martyrdom, or the crucifixion of our wills."—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

"Look up, ye saints of God,
Nor fear to tread below
The path your Saviour trod
Of daily toil and woe;
Wait but a little while
In uncomplaining love,
His own most gracious smile
Shall welcome you above.
Amen."

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MAY 27.

The Request of the Sons of Zebedee.

MARK x. 35-45.

"JAMES and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto Him, saying, Master, we would that Thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And He said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto Him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand, in Thy glory. But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? And they said unto Him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: but to sit on My right hand and on My left hand is not Mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared. And when the ten heard it, they began to be much displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many."

"The discourse of the Apostles ought to make us tremble, and comprehend that if they were not exempt from feelings of pride, and from low and puerile disputes, we are not exempt ourselves, and that we ought to be incessantly on our guard against these dangerous assaults. To engage us to this, let us listen to Jesus, Who here gives us an excellent lesson on humility, by the comparison of two powers which exercise very differently their authority over those subject to them. . . . Study this doctrine; . . . follow the model of perfect humility here set before us. 'Subdue my pride, O my God! and teach me to subdue it myself. Enlighten my mind, in order to convince it of my nothingness.'"—*Avrillon.*

"The just measure of thy greatness is that of thy humility; that of thy real littleness is that of thy pride."—*St. Augustine.*

"Still to the lowly soul
He doth Himself impart;
And for His cradle and His throne
Chooseth the pure in heart."—*Keble.*

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Blind Bartimæus.

MARK x. 46-52.

"AS He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, Thou Son of David,[1] have mercy on me. And many charged him[2] that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto Him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith[3] hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way."[4]

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[1] "Thou Son of David."] "This title implies a belief that Jesus was the promised Messiah."

[2] "Many charged him."] "They would not have him interrupt the solemn and almost triumphant progress of our Lord. They did not know that to aid the distressed was never counted an interruption by Him."

[3] "Thy faith."] "That is, in Christ's Divine power and mercy. Perhaps this faith was shown in *persevering* petition, like that of the woman of Canaan."

[4] "Followed Jesus in the way."] "The company of those who at all times 'follow Jesus' is made up of those who are thankful for His mercies. When He gives us spiritual sight, we too shall gladly follow Him 'in the way,' even if it be the way (like that in which Jesus then went) to suffering and to death."—*Canon How.*

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright.'
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him, my Star, my Sun;
And in that Light of life I'll walk
Till travelling days are done.
Amen."

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MAY 29.

The Colt "whereon never Man sat."

MARK xi. 1-7.

"WHEN they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sendeth forth two of His disciples, and saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat;[1] loose him, and bring him. And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and He sat upon him."[2]

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[1] "Whereon never man sat."] . . . "Whatsoever had never been used for any other purpose was held fittest for sacred use, like the kine which brought up the ark from the country of the Philistines (1 Sam. vi. 7). So our Lord was laid in a tomb 'wherein never man before was laid.'"—*Canon How.*

[2] "Everything happened as He had said. . . . Then they lifted Him upon the colt, and the triumphal procession set forth. . . . He rides, not upon a war-horse, but on an animal which was the symbol of peace. . . . The Apostles recalled in after-days that it fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah (ix. 9). Yes, it was a procession of very lowly pomp, and yet beside it how do the grandest triumphs of aggressive war and unjust conquest sink into utter insignificance and disgrace!"—*Farrar.*

"The history of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem is appointed for the Gospel on Advent Sunday, because it is a type of His coming again at the last day, and of the welcome with which His Saints will hail that coming."—*Canon How.*

"As Judge, on clouds of light,
He soon will come again,
And His true members all unite
With Him in Heaven to reign.

Before the dawning day
Let sin's dark deeds be gone:
The old man all be put away,
The new man all put on.

All glory to the Son,
Who comes to set us free,
With Father, Spirit, ever One,
Through all Eternity. Amen."

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MAY 30.

The Fruitless Tree.

Mark xi. 12-14.

"AND on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, He was hungry: and seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, He came, if haply He might find anything thereon: and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet. And Jesus answered[1] and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And His disciples heard it."[2]

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[1] "Jesus answered."] "As though the tree had spoken by its leaves, and made profession of fruitfulness."—*Canon How.*

[2] "This parable-miracle solemnly speaks to all who have only a name to live—the foliage of outward profession—but who are destitute of the 'fruits of righteousness.' . . . Solemn, then, ought to be the question with every one of us—every Fig-tree in the Lord's plantation—How does it stand with *me?* Am I *now* bringing forth fruit to God? For remember, what we are *now* will fix what we *shall* be when our Lord shall come on the Great Day of Scrutiny. . . . The demand of Jesus will on that day resolve itself into the *one question*—Where is your *fruit?* What evidence is there that you have profited by My admonitions, listened to My voice, and accepted My salvation? Where are your proofs of love to Myself, delight in My service, obedience to My will? Where are the sins you have crucified, the sacrifices you have made, . . . the love and kindness and unselfishness which have supplanted and superseded baser affections? See that the leaves of outward profession be not a snare to you. . . . It is to the *heart* that God looks. If the inner spirit be right, the outer conduct will be fruitful in righteousness. . . . Live not a 'dying life'—that blank existence which brings neither glory to God nor good to men. Seek that *while* you live the world may be the better for you, and when you die the world may miss you. Unlike the pretentious tree in our parable text, be it yours rather to have the nobler character and recompense, so beautifully delineated under a similar figure three thousand years ago—'He shall be like a tree planted by the water-side, that will bring forth his fruit in due season. His leaf also shall not wither; and look, whatsoever he doeth, it shall prosper'" (Ps. i. 3, 4).—"*Memories of Bethany.*"

"A useless life is a sinful life. . . . Do all the good you can. . . . How many persons have leaves without fruit, the appearance of virtue without the reality! How many mistake the results of a happy temperament, a careful education, a worldly sense of honour, . . . for the fruits of holiness! How many, innocent in their own eyes, because the world can bring no charge against them, live soft and useless lives, neither acquiring virtues, nor practising works of mercy!"—"*The Hidden Life.*"

"However lowly my lot, however humble my abilities, may I feel, Lord, that Thou hast work for me in Thy vineyard. Let me not bury my talent in the earth; may I 'occupy it till Thou come,' that Thou mayest receive Thine own with usury."—"*The Morning Watches.*"

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MAY 31.

"The House of Prayer."

MARK xi. 15-18.

"AND they come to Jerusalem: and Jesus went into the Temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the moneychangers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the Temple. And He taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My House shall be called of all nations the House of Prayer? (Isa. lvi. 7) but ye have made it a den of thieves.[1] And the Scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy Him: for they feared Him, because all the people was astonished at His doctrine."

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[1] "We must not pass over the spiritual significance of this act of our Lord. It teaches us with what zeal and sternness we should cleanse the spiritual temple —whether the Church of Christ itself, which St. Peter compares to a 'spiritual house' (1 Peter ii. 5; *comp.* 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17, and Eph. ii. 20-22), or each separate member of the Church, which is also a spiritual application of the figure (1 Cor. vi. 19) from everything that can defile."—*Canon How.*

"Oh! for Thy truth and mercy's sake,
Forgive, and bid me sin no more;
The ruin of my soul repair,
And make my heart a House of Prayer."

"What a happiness were it, if every time you come to His solemn worship some of your strongest sins did receive a new wound, and some of your weakest graces a new strength!"—*Archbishop Leighton.*

"Lord Jesus! Thou hast promised
That Thou wilt deign to be
'Midst those who gather in Thy Name
In humble prayer to Thee.

Prayers, not breathed from feignèd lips,
Not said, but felt sincere;
Such would we offer Thee, dear Lord,
Each time we kneel in prayer.

Lord! teach us to pray to Thee,
As Thou wouldst have us pray;
Jesu! be Thou our Teacher
Of the words that we may say.

That as we pray,—so we may live,
And as we live may die;
That as we die, dear Lord, we feel,
Thy blessed Presence nigh."

—*W. M.*

"Churches are God's Temples whither man comes to pay homage to Him: how reverently then should we demean ourselves in them!"—"*The Hidden Life.*"

"Let us come before His Presence with thanksgiving: and show ourselves glad in Him with Psalms."

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JUNE 1.

The Power of Prayer.

MARK xi. 20-26.

"AND in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. And Peter calling to remembrance saith unto Him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which Thou cursedst is withered away. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God.[1] For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have aught against any: that your Father also Which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father Which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

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[1] "Have faith in God."] "As if He had said, 'My words are power-words indeed. They take effect,—immediate effect. They are not spoken in the air; they achieve something. Little children, ye shall be as your Master. I will teach *you* to speak power-words like Mine. Your prayers for good shall speed to their accomplishment, as surely and as fast as My prayer for evil upon the fig-tree. Ask, and ye shall have. Asking and having shall be linked together as closely as the cursing and the withering of the fig-tree;—if only ye will ask in faith—if only, on the ground of God's promise made to prayer, you will believe, while ye ask, that you receive the object of your petitions. This and another condition—that you forgive injuries,—that you pray in love as well as in faith,—this shall ensure the success of your prayers. You, like your Heavenly Father, shall speak, and it shall be done—you, like Him, shall command, and it shall stand fast."—*Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion."*

"*What* is prayer? The living link by which man is connected with the spiritual world."—*Prescott's "Counsels on Prayer."*

"Do not be content with *saying* prayers, but *Pray.*"—*Bishop Gray to his Son.*

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy Presence will prevail to make,
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take,
What parchèd grounds refresh as with a shower!
. . . . . .
We kneel, how weak, we rise, how full of power!"
—*Archbishop Trench.*

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JUNE 2.

Questioning the Lord.

MARK xi. 27-33.

"AND they come again to Jerusalem: and as He was walking in the Temple, there come to Him the chief priests, and the Scribes, and the elders, and say unto Him, By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority to do these things? And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer Me. And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; He will say, Why then did ye not believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things."[1]

---

[1] "Let a man take heed, that when he goes to inquire of the Lord, he does not set up idols in his own heart, lest God answer him according to his idols."

"Some men walk not before Me in simplicity and purity of heart, but, moved by that curiosity and arrogance which deprived angels of heaven, and Adam of paradise, neglect themselves and their own salvation to search into the counsels of infinite wisdom, and fathom the deep things of God. These fall into dangerous errors and aggravated sins; and their pride and presumption I continually resist. But do thou fear the judgments of God, tremble at the wrath of Omnipotence, and, instead of questioning the proceedings of the Most High, search into the depths of thy own iniquities, that thou mayest know how much evil thou hast done, and how much good thou hast neglected."—"*The Imitation of Christ.*"

"O merciful Lord, Who comest not to the haughty heart, humble Thou my soul. O Thou Who revealest not Thyself save to the pure and clean of heart, give me true cleanness of heart. . . . This I beg, O Lord, not for my own merits, for I am most unworthy of this or any favour, but of Thy loving-kindness, and for the merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."—*St. Augustine.*

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. v. 3).

"Ask only for a holy heart,
And a submissive will
To bear My cross, to do My part,
To trust Me, and be still."

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JUNE 3.

The Voice of Conscience.

MARK xii. 1-12.

"AND He began to speak unto them by parables. A certain man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about it, and digged a place for the winefat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country. And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. And they caught him, and beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away shamefully handled. And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. And they took him, and killed him, and cast him out of the vineyard. What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? he will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? (Ps. cxviii. 22, 23.) And they sought to lay hold on Him, but feared the people: for they knew that He had spoken the parable against them:[1] and they left Him, and went their way."[2]

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[1] "At length Christ and His adversaries stood face to face, as did once before a prophet and a wicked king of Israel, when the prophet, having obtained in his disguise a sentence from the lips of the king against himself, removed the ashes from his face, and the king discerned him that he was 'of the prophets,' and understood that he had unconsciously pronounced his own doom (1 Kings xx. 41). . . . All three Evangelists notice the exasperation of the chief priests and Scribes, when they perceived, as all did at last, though some sooner than others, that the parable was spoken against *them*."—*Trench* "*On the Parables*."

[2] "Oh, whilst thus He speaks to us, may we have the grace to hear! Never may we turn from the words of His reproof to the ways of our own selfishness and sin! Never may we hear without conviction! Never be convinced, without grace to repent!"—*Girdlestone.*

"A tender conscience is an inestimable blessing; that is, a conscience not only quick to discern what is evil, but instantly to shun it, as the eyelid closes itself against a mote."—*Adams's* "*Private Thoughts.*"

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JUNE 4.

Duty to God and Man.

MARK xii. 13-17.

"AND they send unto Him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch Him in His words. And when they were come, they say unto Him, Master, we know that Thou art true, and carest for no man: for Thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give? But He, knowing their hypocrisy,[1] said unto them, Why tempt ye Me? bring Me a penny, that I may see it. And they brought it. And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto Him, Cæsar's. And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's.[2] And they marvelled at Him."

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[1] "How impious then, and not impious only, but utterly vain, is any attempt to veil from His all-seeing Eye our inmost thoughts! . . . He knew their hypocrisy. He knoweth ours. He knoweth if in anything we make a show of inquiring His will with other purpose than to learn and do it. 'Why tempt ye Me?' is the answer we provoke, whenever we read His Word without hearty affection and sincere intention to fulfil what there we find. Or if we ask of Him in prayer, without longing for His grace, if we pray even for grace, without purpose to work with it to the uttermost ourselves, what other reply can we expect to our petitions, than the same words of sorrow and condemnation: 'Why tempt ye Me?'"—*Girdlestone.*

[2] "Render to Cæsar."] "Where the two rules here given seem to clash, there can be no doubt which is to be followed. See the answer of the Apostles St. Peter and St. John to the command laid on them not to teach in the Name of Jesus (Acts iv. 19 and v. 29). Only, in all cases where the plea of conscience is used in opposing lawful authority, we must be very sure that we have God's law on our side, and are not mistaking for it our own notions or interpretations of it, or even (as is common enough) our own self-will."—*Canon How.*

"Help us, O Lord, 'to have a right judgment in all things.'"

"Remember, that the deceit of our crafty nature is little known to us. For oftentimes when we think that our end and motive is to please God, this is really not the case, but nature's deceitful way of seeking self."—*Scupoli's "Spiritual Combat."*

"When truth is overborne, and error reigns,
When clamour lords it over patient love,
Give the brave calmness which from wrath refrains,
Yet from the steadfast course declines one foot to move."—*Bonar.*

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JUNE 5.

The Future Life.

MARK xii. 18-27.

"THEN come unto Him the Sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked Him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife behind him, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were seven brethren, and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. In the resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God? For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the Angels[1] which are in heaven. And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? (Exod. iii. 6-16.) He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err."

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[1] "As the Angels."] "That is, in a pure and spiritual state, in which human passions and earthly ties find no place. . . . They that 'hear the Word of God, and keep it' (Luke xi. 28), shall hereafter be united in a glorious and blissful union with their Lord and with one another, far surpassing the closest and most blessed of earthly fellowships."—*Canon How.*

"Seek not to penetrate into futurity, neither encourage a habit of anticipating good or evil. Our trials do not always come from those occasions which we may have foreseen. . . . Let, then, the obedience of every day and of every hour be your daily bread. Live upon the will of your God. Strive to pass your life in peace, simplicity, and resignation; place your hopes of happiness in God, and not in His creatures, and you will then be secure; for on Him you may rely with full confidence."—*Fénelon.*

"O Lord, let me always fully and entirely resign myself to Thy disposal, and have no desires of my own, but a perfect satisfaction in Thy choice for me; that so, in whatever state I am, I may be therein content."—"*Whole Duty of Man.*"

"Wait; and He will Himself disclose
Things now beyond our reach."

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JUNE 6.

The Great Commandment.

MARK xii. 28-31.

"AND one of the Scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength (Deut. vi. 4, 5):[1] this is the first commandment. And the second is like,[2] namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself (Lev. xix. 18). There is none other commandment greater than these."[3]

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[1] . . . "What a command this is! Who has ever obeyed, or can ever obey it? How then should such a command, so far above what we can attain to, humble us, and teach us our helplessness and sinfulness! Let us adopt in this matter the prayer which was uttered by the father of the lunatic child, only putting 'love' for 'faith,' and say, Lord, I love Thee; help Thou my want of love." —*Canon How.*

[2] "And the second is like."] "The first is the *sun*, so to speak, of the spiritual life; this the *lesser light*, which reflects the shining of that other."—*Alford.*

[3] . . . "Though each needs to be explicitly mentioned, they are not two independent commandments. We are to love our neighbour for God and in God, because God has created and redeemed him (no less than ourselves); we are to see in him God's handiwork, and a soul redeemed by God, and to love him *as such*. And this only, and no lower regard, constitutes Christian love." —*Goulburn's "Pursuit of Holiness."*

"Oh that the love of God may be the commanding principle of my soul! May I always have this comfortable proof of His love abiding in me, that I study to please Him, and to keep His commandments. And may my love to my neighbour be such as God has commanded: that I may give and forgive and love, as becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ. Amen."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"It is the Love which the Holy Ghost communicates to the heart which alone is worthy of the name of Love. . . . Love does not seek to act according to its own will, but to know the will of the loved one, and to do it."—*Rev R. M. Benson.*

"Replenish my poor heart with love,
With love, O Lord, of Thee above;
Let me of Thee my pattern take,
And love my brother for Thy sake."
—*Ridley's "Every-Day Companion."*

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JUNE 7.

Knowledge of the Truth.

MARK xii. 32-34.

"AND the Scribe said unto Him, Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth: for there is one God; and there is none other but He: and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.[1] And no man after that durst ask Him any question."

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[1] "Thou art not far."] "Thou standest with this knowledge at the door; set thy foot on the threshold of repentance, and come within to faith."—*Stier.*

. . . "Faith is the heart's first approach to Christ, Who by His own merit heals all who apply to Him. The faith, if genuine, fastens not on any doctrine, but on the Person of the Saviour, and works the renovation of the character through the love of Him which it engenders. Have you the faith which makes you an adherent of Himself? and is it working by love? Do you study His character, as it is portrayed by the Evangelists, looking often and lovingly upon His picture, as we do upon the portraits of those we love? Is it your delight to be continually reminded of His Presence, and do you instinctively seek that Presence in the intervals of business and amusement, and among the trials of the day? And do you delight to feel that you are especially in His Presence, when two or three are gathered together to commemorate His dying Love in the holy mysteries of His own appointment? . . . These are the questions by which to determine our love of the Saviour, and therefore our love of God, Whose image He is. And this love is the very criterion of Christian character. . . . 'If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.'"—*Goulburn's "Pursuit of Holiness."*

"We have not, for we ask not, and our sorrow
Will not suffice to bring us back to peace,
Nor ever shall we know a brighter morrow,
Till Faith toward God and Love to man increase.

Send down, O Lord, send down Thy Holy Spirit,
To fill our hearts, and lead our steps above;—
That we may toil for that which we inherit,
The kingdom of Thy glory and Thy love.

Give us the splendour of those golden ages,
Such unity of heart and faith, that we
May quench with love the battle-fire that rages
In this rude world, 'gainst truth, and peace, and Thee."

—*Monsell.*

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JUNE 8.

The Son of David.

MARK xii. 35-37.

"AND Jesus answered and said, while He taught in the Temple, How say the Scribes that Christ is the Son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost,[1] The LORD said to my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool (Ps. cx. 1). David therefore himself calleth Him Lord; and whence is He then his Son? And the common people heard him gladly."[2]

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[1] "By the Holy Ghost."] "The inspiration of the Psalmist is here very distinctly affirmed. . . . It is to be observed that the Jews understood that the words 'my Lord' in the verse quoted must be spoken of Christ."—*Canon How.*

"Few things can be recommended to Christians of greater service than to get into the habit of using the Psalms as a book of devotion. They are so full of the breathings of the devout soul under all kinds of circumstances, that whenever the feelings are stirred by joy or sorrow, hope or fear, those who have the Psalms at their hearts will find them rise to their lips. Do not read them only for *instruction;* they are lofty *devotion*, inspired by the Spirit of God, and we must try to raise up our hearts to them."—"*Ways of Overcoming Temptation.*"

[2] "Do *we* hear Him gladly? What fruits are *we* bringing forth of the spiritual benefits which have been vouchsafed to us for many generations? What is our present state as to Christian faith and Christian practice? What is our religious condition generally, as to temperance and sobriety, purity, chastity, and 'holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord'? What as to charity, and brotherly love, which are indispensable requisites for acceptance with God? (1 Cor. xiii.) We know from our future Judge, that it will 'be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon,' and even 'for Sodom and Gomorrha, at the Day of Judgment,' than for those who have heard the Gospel and who lead godless lives. Unless we believe and obey the Gospel, we may read in the miserable fate of Jerusalem a prophecy of our own destiny for eternity."—*Bishop Wordsworth.*

"O come, Thou Rod of Jesse, free
Thine own from Satan's tyranny;
From depths of hell Thy people save,
And give them victory o'er the grave.
O come, Thou Key of David, come,
And open wide our heavenly home;
Make safe the way that leads on high,
And close the path to misery."

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JUNE 9.

Pride and Hypocrisy.

MARK xii. 38-40.

"AND He said unto them in His doctrine, Beware of the Scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the market-places, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation."[1]

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[1] . . . "The hypocritical Pharisee shows himself with ostentation; the humble Christian hides himself with care, and is never more pleased with himself than when he has no eyes but those of God as witnesses of the good action he has done, because he has had Him only in view. Ask thyself for whom thou labourest when thou prayest, when thou fastest, and when thou givest alms. . . . What thinkest thou of thyself? What thinkest thou of others? Art thou really persuaded of thy nothingness? Labour to know thyself well: banish self-love from this examination; it is a blind guide, who conceals thy faults from thee, and will ever make thee appear to thyself better than thou art. If thou listenest to it, thou wilt soon esteem thyself above thy true value. If thou desirest not to deceive thyself, ever think of thyself below that thou believest thyself to be; and of thy neighbour above that thou seest in him; it is this which will lead thee to a true humility of spirit. Examine again the feelings of thy heart. Does it form no desires for the first places? Does it not think that it deserves better than others? Feelest thou no secret emotion when thy neighbour is praised, or when he is preferred to thee? What care takest thou to repress these feelings, which are the fruits of pride? . . . 'He that exalteth himself shall be abased.' Engrave this sentence deeply in thy heart, as a precious memorial, in order to repress all the sallies of pride when thou shalt feel that they begin to rise in thy soul. . . . Think of the humble words which Jesus spoke of Himself, when He declared Himself the servant of all. . . . Alas! if the humility of a Saviour-God cures not our pride, there is no further remedy." —*Avrillon.*

"Humility, if genuine, is the sweetest flower which grows in the garden of God, and any opportunities of cultivating it should be highly prized and carefully improved."—*Goulburn's "Personal Religion."*

"Not our pride, nor our success,
Angels' sympathy may win,
But the tear of heart-distress,
Shed in penitence for sin.

. . . . . .

Such the tears repentance sheds,
When the soul to God is given;
Dewdrops *here* on drooping heads,
Jewels *there*, and 'Joy in Heaven.'"—*Monsell.*

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JUNE 10.

The Widow's Mite.

MARK xii. 41-44.

"AND Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two[1] mites, which make a farthing. And He called unto Him His disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:[2] for all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living."[3]

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[1] . . . "It has been observed that possibly the '*two*' are mentioned to show that it was not simply the *only* coin the poor woman had which she gave, but that she freely gave *all*, for she might, had she pleased, have given only one of the mites."

[2] "Cast more in, than all."] "Yes, more in God's sight, for He measures not by the amount of the sum given, but by its proportion to the means of the giver."

[3] "Even all her living."] "That is, all she had at that time to live upon. She doubtless trusted in God, and said to herself, 'The Lord will provide.' How many would laugh at this poor widow's simple-minded gift of all she had! Yet Jesus accepted it. Possibly she had some special reason for gratitude, having received some special mercy. At any rate, her gift was the token of a loving generous heart, and that gave it its value. How contemptible is it to hear a rich man speak of his '*mite*,' when he gives some mere trifle. His '*mite*,' if he understood the word, would mean his *all*."—*Canon How.*

"The veriest trifle we can give
Will yet accepted be,
If given with a willing mind,
And given, Lord, to Thee."

"God loveth a cheerful giver" (2 Cor. ix. 7).

"She wist not that Christ was watching,
As she offered her alms so small;
She heard not His commendation:
'She hath given, yea, more than all.'

For the prayer in which she wrapped it
Outweighed the treasury's gold;
And the mites which made but a farthing
Have yielded a million-fold."—"*Parish Magazine.*"

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JUNE 11.

The Temple of Jerusalem.

MARK xiii. 1-8.

"AS He went out of the Temple, one of His disciples saith unto Him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here! And Jesus answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.[1] And as He sat upon the Mount of Olives over against the Temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be?[2] and what shall be the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any man deceive you: for many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these are the beginnings of sorrows."

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[1] "It appears from Josephus, that there was scarcely anything more remarkable in this celebrated Temple, than the stupendous size of the stones of which it was constructed. . . . This circumstance gives peculiar force to our Saviour's prediction here, which was fulfilled almost in a literal sense; for when the Romans had taken Jerusalem, Titus ordered his soldiers to dig up the foundations both of the city and of the Temple."—*Bishop Porteous.*

"It was an awful prophecy, and the hearts of those who heard it must have failed with fear as they thought of 'those things which were coming upon the earth.' Within forty years after that time Zion had become a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation; the Holy and the Beautiful House where God was praised was burned with fire, and all the pleasant things of the land of Judah had become waste."—"*Thoughts for the Holy Week.*"

[2] "When shall these things be?"] "Our Lord replies, not by revealing the time, but by teaching how to prepare for its arrival. Hence we learn that we ought never to consult His Word for the gratification of an idle curiosity; but for the improvement of our hearts, for the direction of our conduct. How long this world may last, or how soon it may come to an end, what matters this to us, compared with how we may best abide that end whensoever it arrives, how best be fitted to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ. This then let us inquire of Him sincerely, and we may be sure He will vouchsafe us a gracious answer."—*Girdlestone.*

"Be not slothful, be not listless: eternal life is thy reward."—*St. Augustine.*

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JUNE 12.

The Reward of Perseverance to "the End."

MARK xiii. 9-13.

"BUT take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils;[1] and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings[2] for My sake, for a testimony against them. And the Gospel must first be published among all nations. But when they shall lead you, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against their parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved."[3]

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[1] "To councils."] "Two of those who had questioned our Lord, St. Peter and St. John, were brought before the Council at Jerusalem for preaching in the Name of Christ (Acts iv. 6, 7); and St. Peter, with other Apostles, a second time shortly after (Acts v. 27), on which occasion they were 'beaten' (Acts v. 40)."

[2] "Rulers and kings."] "So was St. Paul brought before Felix, Festus, and King Agrippa" (Acts xxiv.—xxvi.).—*Canon How.*

[3] "If thou seekest rest in this life, how wilt thou attain to the everlasting rest of the world to come? True rest is to be found, not on earth, but in heaven. . . . For the love of God, therefore, thou must cheerfully and patiently endure labour and sorrow, persecution, temptation, and anxiety, poverty and want, pain and sickness, detraction, reproof, humiliation, confusion, correction and contempt. By these, the virtues of 'the new man in Christ Jesus' are exercised and strengthened; these form the ornaments of His celestial crown."—*Thomas à Kempis.*

"Through tribulation great they came,
They bore the cross, despised the shame;
From all their labours now they rest,
In God's eternal glory blest.

O may we tread the sacred road
That Saints and holy Martyrs trod;
Wage to the end the glorious strife,
And win, like them, a crown of life."

"O God, Who hast warned us of the troubles that shall come upon the earth, grant that we may not be moved by any distresses incident to our own day, but may walk in the Light, and serve Thee with unshaken faith, waiting for the final manifestation of Thy Son Jesus Christ, . . . Who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Ghost, One God, world without end. Amen."—*Benson's "Benedictus Dominus."*

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JUNE 13.

The Destruction of Jerusalem.

MARK xiii. 14-20.

"BUT when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judæa flee to the mountains: and let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter therein, to take anything out of his house: and let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days."[1]

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[1] "In that awful siege [of Jerusalem] it is believed that there perished 1,100,000 men, beside the 97,000 who were carried captive, and most of whom perished subsequently in the arena or the mine; and it was an awful thing to feel, as some of the survivors and eye-witnesses—and they not Christians—*did* feel, that the city had deserved its overthrow by producing a generation of men who were the causes of its misfortunes;" and that "neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor *did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this was, since the beginning of the world.*"—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Every man's harvest *hereafter* shall be according to his seed-time here. The actions of this life are as seed sown for the life to come; if the husbandman sow *tares*, he must not expect to reap *wheat;* for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—*Burkitt.*

"Turn thee then without delay to the Lord thy God in these happy days of penitence and grace, 'because He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, of great kindness,' and His Divine mercy infinitely surpasses thy sins and thine iniquities, however great and numerous they may be."—*Avrillon.*

"Let us go and thank God humbly on our knees that the time is still ours—that the Master of the House has not yet risen up and shut to the door—that our hardness and impenitence has not yet wearied out His long-suffering love. Let us see to it that days to come, if such be given us, be so spent for His glory and so given to His service that our life may show forth, and not our lips only, our adoring thankfulness that there is still '*time* to seek the Lord.'"—*Rev. Hamilton Blyth.*

"We know not that we shall have another day to repent."—*Rev. R. M. Benson.*

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JUNE 14.

The Second Advent.

MARK xiii. 21-27.

"AND then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is Christ; or, lo, He is there; believe him not: for false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if it were possible, even the elect. But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall He send His Angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven." [1]

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[1] "'We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ' (2 Cor. v. 10). 'All!' there is no eluding that searching scrutiny—'Every eye shall see Him!' . . . Who is to be thy Judge? Who is to be enthroned on that tribunal of unerring rectitude, before Whom every knee is to bow and every heart is to be laid open? . . . Oh! it is no stranger! It is He Who died for thee, and Who is now interceding for thee. . . . My soul! seek to know this God-man Mediator on a throne of grace, ere you meet Him on a throne of judgment! . . . What an incentive to increased aspirations after holiness and higher spiritual attainments, to remember that the awards of that day and of eternity will be determined by the transactions of time! It is a grand Bible principle, that, though justified by faith, we shall be judged by works. Nay more, while from first to last, Jesus, and Jesus alone, is the meritorious cause of salvation, yet the works flowing from faith *in* Him and love *to* Him will regulate the degree of future bliss; whether we shall be among the 'greatest' or the 'least' in the kingdom—whether we shall occupy the outskirts of glory, or revolve in orbits around the throne in the blaze of God's immediate presence!"—"*The Night Watches.*"

"The Coming of the Lord to judgment must be full of awe to the most devout soul. But this awe in Christ's true servants will be mingled with a fervent desire for the great triumph of their Lord over sin and death to be then consummated. He who loves Christ's appearing, says St. Chrysostom, will strive to obtain before His general coming, a peculiar coming to himself, according to the promise, 'If a man love Me, I will come unto him, and make My abode with him.'"—*Canon Woodford.*

"Live as those who, on His Eye,
Hang with love, and walk thereby;
'In thy lot' prepared stand,
For the Lord is nigh at hand!"—*Monsell.*

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JUNE 15.

Watchfulness and Prayer.

MARK xiii. 28-37.

"NOW learn a parable of the fig-tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: so ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the Angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. For the Son of Man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.[1] And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch."

---

[1] "Sleeping."] "In the description of the evil servant in St. Matthew (xxiv.) quarrelling and drunkenness are the sins laid against him. Here, in applying the lesson, our Lord warns His hearers against the milder sin of sloth, for this is enough to condemn."—*Canon How.*

"Oh! on that day, that wrathful day,
When man to judgment wakes from clay,
Be Thou, O Christ, the sinner's stay,
Though heaven and earth shall pass away. Amen."

"O Thou, Who hast foretold that Thou wilt return to judgment in an hour that we are not aware of, grant us grace to watch and pray always, that whether Thou shalt come at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning, Thou mayest find us in the number of those servants who shall be blessed for watching for their Lord, and save us."—*Bishop Andrewes' "Devotions."*

"In my last and greatest need; in the hour of death, and in the Day of Judgment; good Lord, deliver me."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Thou, Who on the judgment-day
Our most secret thoughts shall weigh,
Shield us now with pitying care,
Guard us from temptation's snare."
—*Ridley's "Everyday Companion."*

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JUNE 16.

The "Alabaster Box of Ointment."

MARK xiv. 3-9.

"AND being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on His head. And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on Me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but Me ye have not always. She hath done what she could:[1] she is come aforehand to anoint My body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her."

---

[1] "'She hath done what she could,'
Her poor all hath expended,
With ointment most precious
Her Lord to prepare;
'She hath done what she could,'
And her Lord hath commended
For His body her love,
For His burial her care.

The spikenard the worldly
Would lavish on pleasure,
The hair that the trifling
Would deck to deceive,
The one she pours out
On her Lord, without measure,
A robe for His feet
With the other doth weave.

The thoughtless may wonder,
The Godless may slight her,
And murmuring ask,
To what purpose such waste?
What matter! the Lord
With His love doth requite her,
Her deed on the roll
Of His records hath placed.

Thus, Lord, give us ever
The grace to watch by Thee,
In sorrow and shade,
As in sunshine and joy;
Our bliss, wheresoever
Thou art, to be nigh Thee,
Our wealth, all we have
For Thy use to employ.

O blest above measure,
If we too may hear Thee
Accept our poor service
Imperfect and rude,
And—marking with favour
The faithful who fear Thee—
This blessing bestow,—
'They have done what they could.'"—*Monsell.*

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JUNE 17.

The Omniscience and Omnipresence of God.

MARK xiv. 12-16.

"AND the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover, His disciples said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we go and prepare that Thou mayest eat the Passover? And He sendeth forth two of His disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished and prepared: there make ready for us. And His disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover."[1]

---

[1] "Seek, wherever you are, and under whatever circumstances, to feel that you are never alone, never unseen, never unnoticed. Not only the holy Angels are watching around, not only are the little actions of your daily life noted down against a day of reckoning, but One, ever kind and merciful and pitiful, is watching over you, as a father his child. . . . Accustom yourself to dwell upon this ever-present companionship; accustom yourself to feel that, go where you may, turn where you will, under whatever circumstances, whatever trials, that watchful Eye rests upon you, not merely to rebuke and restrain, to chasten and judge, but to warn gently in temptation, to soothe and cheer in trial, to encourage and sustain in difficulty, to point out at all times the way in which you should go, if you will but seek that direction. To quote the words of one who practised his own precept (Donne), 'Be no stranger to God's Face; seek Him *here*, that you may know Him and He you *there*; and then, as a picture looks upon him that looks upon it, God, upon Whom thou keepest thine eye, will keep His Eye upon thee.'"—*Anon.*

"Set God before thee; every word
Thy lips pronounce by Him is heard;
Oh! couldst thou realize this thought,
What care, what caution, would be taught!"

—*Charlotte Elliott.*

"He who sins against man may *fear* discovery; he who sins against God is *sure* of it."—"*Parish Magazine.*"

"I believe, O most mighty God, that Thou art indeed present, and that no thought, word, or action of mine is hidden from Thee. I am not worthy to come before Thee. Have mercy upon me, and help me to lift up my soul unto Thee. Amen."—"*The Narrow Way.*"

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JUNE 18.

The Traitor.

MARK xiv. 17-21.

"AND in the evening He cometh with the twelve. And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with Me shall betray Me. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto Him one by one, Is it I? and another said, Is it I? And He answered and said unto them, It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with Me in the dish. The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him: but[1] woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born."

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[1] "'Words,' it has been well said, 'of immeasurable ruin, words of immeasurable woe'—and the more terrible because uttered by the lips of immeasurable Love; words capable, if any were capable, of revealing to the lost soul of the traitor all the black gulf of horror that was yawning before his feet."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

. . . "How awful to think of one so near to Christ, and yet so lost! That such a thing should be possible is a terrible warning to all such as have great privileges, and much outward nearness to Christ and holy things."—*Canon How.*

"He who, admitted near his Lord,
Tended with care parental,
Had seen His deeds, and heard His word,
So loving and so gentle,
Rises, and goes his fearful way
Out into darkness to betray.

O Saviour! teach us how to take
Warning from that offender;
And keep our souls, for Thy dear sake,
To Thee still true and tender;
Lest, turning wilfully away,
We leave Thy Table, to betray.

One downward step of early sin
Indulged in or neglected,
One look of love—our hearts to win
Back to Thy side—rejected;
May our soul's separation be
Eternally, O God, from Thee."—*Monsell.*

. . . "And he was an Apostle, and had done miracles in Christ's Name. He was like Capernaum and the evil one, exalted unto heaven, and failed there, and was cast out hopelessly into hell. Judas chose evil in the midst of the choicest good. That was his curse. How much of the choicest good has fallen unto my lot, especially in frequent Communions! And if in my heart I still choose evil and do despite to the Spirit of grace, my doom will be the same as that of Judas. Awful warning!"—*Ridley's "Everyday Companion."*

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JUNE 19.

The Institution of the Eucharist.

MARK xiv. 22-25.

"AND as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is My Body. And He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And He said unto them, This is My Blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God."[1]

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[1] "That night, when men were plotting against Him, He was devising good for their souls: He could not be separated from us. . . . He gave a new way to restore, to feed, to strengthen His people."—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

. . . "The Lord's Supper has from the earliest times borne the name of the 'Eucharist,' which means the 'giving of thanks;' and this name well expresses the character which properly belongs to this holy Sacrament,—that, namely, of a thankful and joyful service."—*Canon How.*

"This sacred memorial of His Passion the blessed Jesus left behind Him, to be the standing pledge of His mercy, and the continual food of our souls, which no famine, but one of our own making, can cut off from us."—*Wogan.*

"I beg you to consider how deeply it concerns your soul's health not to neglect or deprive yourselves of this precious help, nor refuse the dying command of your Saviour's infinite love."—"*Brighstone Sermons.*"

"O blessed Lord, Who of Thy great love didst institute the blessed Sacrament of Thy Body and Blood, whereby Thou mightest continue with us to the end of the world: stir up in me an earnest desire and longing after this holy Sacrament, and grant that I may ever receive it with a chaste love, deep affection, and pure heart; and be merciful to me."—*Bishop Andrewes.*

"O God, unseen yet ever near,
Thy Presence may we feel;
And, thus inspired with holy fear,
Before Thy Altar kneel.

We come, obedient to Thy Word,
To feast on heavenly food;
Our meat the Body of our Lord,
Our drink His precious Blood.

Thus may we all Thy Word obey,
For we, O God, are Thine;
And go rejoicing on our way,
Renewed with strength Divine. Amen."

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JUNE 20.

The Danger of Self-confidence.

MARK xiv. 26-31.

"AND when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives. And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered (Zech. xiii. 7). But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter said unto Him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I.[1] And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. But he spake the more vehemently,[2] If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all."

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[1] "Alas! it is one thing to be bold beforehand, another thing to remain firm when dangers and temptations come. How often have I resolved and failed in the hour of trial!"—*"Daily Steps towards Heaven."*

"Let him who thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

"Avoid everything approaching to self-confidence, and let the constant desire of your heart and effort of your life be, to maintain a humble, self-distrusting, prayerful walk with God."—*Blunt's "Lectures."*

[2] "The more vehemently."] "Vehemence—a hasty, rash, impetuous spirit—was St. Peter's stumblingblock. Had he spoken less vehemently, and more humbly, he might have been in less danger. 'When pride cometh, then cometh shame'" (Prov. xi. 2).—*Canon How.*

"Ask the very soul of St. Peter, and it shall undoubtedly make you this answer: 'My eager protestations made in the glory of my spiritual strength, I am ashamed of. But my shame, and the tears with which my presumption and my weakness were bewailed, recur in the songs of my thanksgivings. My strength had been my ruin; my fall hath proved my stay.'"—*Hooker.*

"Make me mindful of my weakness, that I may be more watchful and importunate for grace."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"How many times with faithless word
Have we denied His holy Name,
How oft forsaken our dear Lord,
And shrunk when trial came!

. . . . . .

O oft forsaken, oft denied,
Forgive our shame, wash out our sin!"

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Gethsemane.

MARK xiv. 32-36.

"AND they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and He saith to His disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. And He taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed,[1] and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. And He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, Abba, Father, all things are possible unto Thee; take away this cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt."[2]

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[1] "Sore amazed."] "That is, 'greatly troubled in mind.' There is no idea of *surprise* here, as in our common use of the word 'amazed.'"—*Canon How.*

[2] "'Father, Thy will, not Mine, be done;'
So pray'd on earth Thy suffering Son;
So in His Name I pray.
The spirit faints, the flesh is weak,
Thy help in agony I seek,
Oh! take this cup away.

If such be not Thy sovereign will,
Thy wiser purpose then fulfil;
My wishes I resign;
Into Thy hands my soul commend,
On Thee for life or death depend;
Thy will be done, not mine."
—"*Christian Lyrics.*"

"Let this be the constant practice of my life, to be pleased with all Thy choices, that when sickness and death approach, I may be prepared to submit my will to the will of my Maker. And oh! that in the meantime, my heart may always go along with my lips in this petition, 'Thy will be done.' Amen."
—*Bishop Wilson.*

"It was not so much the cruelty as the futility of His sufferings that cost our Saviour the keenest pangs. Cruel as they were, they had seemed sweet could He have hoped to save the whole world. Those thorns, those nails, that cross, had ceased to torture, could He have hoped to touch thy heart, and ensure thy salvation. But the thought that while His Blood more than sufficed to ransom a million worlds, it would not soften the hardness of thy heart, or win thy love, or procure thy salvation—ah! that was the *cup* which He prayed might *pass* from Him."—"*The Hidden Life.*"

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JUNE 22.

The Sleep of the Apostles.

MARK xiv. 37-42.

"AND He cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak.[1] And again He went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again (for their eyes were heavy), neither wist they what to answer Him. And He cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take your rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth Me is at hand."[2]

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[1] "The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak."] "Such were the words of our blessed Lord as He contemplated the sleeping forms of His weak disciples. They have in them much that is humiliating; they have in them something that is comforting also. Jesus recognises the willing spirit, albeit it is hidden in the weakness of the flesh. And as the Saviour did of old, so does He now. . . . Deeply conscious of the weakness of the flesh, let us invoke the help of the Holy Ghost, and He will energize it for all it has to bear and do. Be it our part to bear and do, leaving all results with God. . . . The willing spirit shall never want the glorious crown."—*Rev. P. B. Power.*

"The night is dark—behold, the shade was deeper
In the still garden of Gethsemane,
When that calm Voice awoke the weary sleeper,
'Couldst not thou watch one hour alone with Me?'

. . . . . .

Here are we all to suffer, walking lonely
The path that Jesus once Himself hath gone;
Watch thou this hour in trustful patience only,
This one dark hour before the eternal dawn:

And He will come in His own time from Heaven,
To set His earnest-hearted children free;
Watch only through this dark and painful even,
And the bright morning yet will break for thee."
—"*Lyra Anglicana.*"

[2] "Consider that thy merciful Lord suffered under no compulsion, nor for any personal advantage, but purely, as He hath told thee, out of love for thee. . . . Be afraid and tremble lest the mere idea of being unwilling to suffer for the love of thy Lord should ever enter into thy heart."—*Scupoli's "Spiritual Combat."*

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JUNE 23.

"One of the Twelve."

MARK xiv. 43-50.

"WHILE He yet spake, cometh Judas,[1] one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the Scribes and the elders. And he that betrayed Him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He; take Him, and lead Him away safely. And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to Him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed Him. And they laid their hands on Him, and took Him. And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and with staves to take Me? I was daily with you in the Temple teaching, and ye took Me not: but the Scriptures must be fulfilled. And they all forsook Him, and fled."[2]

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[1] "Unhappy man! Victim of one passion—covetousness. One is enough for eternal ruin. Notwithstanding my Christian calling (for Judas was an Apostle), if I indulge one sin, where may it not lead me? To many—to ruin."—*"Daily Steps towards Heaven."*

"All acts of love all means of grace
His stubborn soul refuseth,
Self occupies the Saviour's place,
And His best gifts abuseth;
The wretch, through wretched love of pelf,
Betrays His Lord, betrays himself.

Long had he harbour'd secret sin,
And long with truth had trifled;
Now Satan safely enters in,
And God's own shrine is rifled;
The hands, that long in secret stole,
Now sell his Saviour, and his soul.

By slow degrees the deed was done;
The fetters, that now bound him,
Had, day by day and one by one,
Been surely drawn around him:
He would not burst them when he could,
He could not burst them when he would.

Alas! how little they can know
The end of the beginning,
Who calculate how far to go
Into the ways of sinning;
Turn to Aceldama, and there
Witness the suicide's despair."

—*Monsell.*

[2] "We see here the fulfilment of our Lord's words, 'All ye shall be offended because of Me this night.' If *Apostles* were so weak, what need have *we* of prayer and watching lest we forsake our Lord in the hour of danger!"—*Canon How.*

"May I never dishonour Thee, O Heavenly Father, by word or deed."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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JUNE 24.

"The Son of The Blessed."

MARK xiv. 53-64.

"AND they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with Him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the Scribes. And Peter followed Him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire. And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put Him to death; and found none. For many bare false witness against Him, but their witness agreed not together. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against Him, saying, We heard Him say, I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. But neither so did their witness agree together. And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest Thou nothing? what is it which these witness against Thee? But He held His peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked Him, and said unto Him, Art Thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?[1] And Jesus said, I am:[2] and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death."

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[1] "The Son of the Blessed."] "'The Blessed' was a very common Jewish expression for God, though it is not used in the New Testament, except here by Caiaphas."—*Canon How.*

[2] "I am."] "Jesus knew when He uttered these words that He was pronouncing His own sentence. Until that question was asked Him, He had been dumb, opening not His mouth. But the form in which the question was put, left Him no choice but to answer. The moment in which He most distinctly claimed to be the Christ the Son of God was the moment when such a claim was His death-knell. Even with the disciples He had seldom insisted on being the Messiah; He had never held Himself aloof from them in kingly state. With them He was the Son of Man, their Brother; before the Sanhedrim He called Himself the Son of God, their Judge."—"*The Wonderful Life.*"

"Great Judge, to Thee our prayers we pour,
In deep abasement bending;
O shield us through that last dread hour,
Thy wondrous love extending;
May we, in this our trial day,
With faithful hearts Thy Word obey,
And thus prepare to meet Thee. Amen."

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JUNE 25.

Denial of Christ.

MARK xiv. 66-72.

"AND as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest: and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew. And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is one of them. And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art one of them: for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth thereto. But he began to curse and to swear, saying, I know not this Man of whom ye speak. And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept."[1]

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[1] "Never lower your principles to the world's standard. Never let sin, however popular it may be, have any sanction or countenance from you, even by a smile. The manly confession of Christ, when His cause is unpopular, is made by Himself the condition of His confessing us before men."—*Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion."*

"How far the sin of St. Peter has been ours, each must answer for himself now by strict self-examination, or wait to discover it when every secret thought and action shall be made known before the Judgment-seat of God. Want of moral courage is among the most common, the most easily excused, of human failings; and perhaps, at times, when conscience has reproached us for false excuses, prevarications, pretences, the effect of our weakness, we have dwelt with somewhat of comfort upon the recollection that such also was the sin of the great Apostle who afterwards laid down his life for his Lord. But we may grievously deceive ourselves by such a comparison. If the weakness which caused St. Peter's fall was great, yet greater was the affection which led him to place himself in the way of temptation. Before we compare our cowardice with his, let us first compare our love. What is it? Have we followed Christ this day, even afar off? . . . Doubtless his was a grievous sin; doubtless his also was a deep repentance: for ever, through his life long, as Peter heard the cock crow, it is said that he fell on his knees and wept, and prayed for pardon. 'Blessed the tears,' saith St. Ambrose, 'which wash away guilt.' . . . Lord Jesus, look on us, that we may know how to weep for our sin, and wash out the guilt." This is "a prayer which may well rise from every heart."—*"Thoughts for the Holy Week."*

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JUNE 26.

The Silence of Christ.

MARK xv. 1-5.

"AND straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and Scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried Him away, and delivered Him to Pilate. And Pilate asked Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And He answering said unto him, Thou sayest it.[1] And the chief priests accused Him of many things: but He answered nothing.[2] And Pilate asked Him again, saying, Answerest Thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against Thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled."

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[1] "That is, 'It is so.' Jesus calmly avows what He cannot truthfully deny. At present He makes no explanation. The clamour and impatience of His accusers prevent that. Yet Pilate knows that His words have some hidden meaning. He does not (like Caiaphas) break out at the confession, and cry, 'He hath spoken treason!' He waits to hear more."—*Canon How.*

[2] "Hence we learn both when to be silent, and when to speak. A false charge we may meet with silence, not answering again. But if there be a question which we are constrained to answer, a truth which our silence might seem to deny, that truth we are bound to tell, however great the inconvenience; that truth we are bound to tell, though, like the reply of our blessed Lord, it were to cost us life itself."—*Girdlestone.*

"It is no small wisdom to keep silence in an evil time, and inwardly to turn thyself to Me, nor to be troubled by the judgment of men."—"*Imitation of Christ.*"

"Accustom yourselves to silence, if you would learn to govern your tongue."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"O blessed Lord, Who wouldst not reply to the unjust accusations of Thine enemies, but mildly with a deaf ear wouldst let them pass; grant that no slanders may move me to impatience, but that by Thine example I may patiently overcome all that any way defame and injure me; and be merciful to me. Amen."—*Litany of Bishop Andrewes.*

"How shall the praise of silence best be told?
To speak is silver,—to hold peace is gold.
Thy word unspoken thou canst any day
Speak, but thy spoken ne'er again unsay."

—*Archbishop Trench.*

"He that refraineth his lips is wise" (Prov. x. 19).

"Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath" (James i. 19).

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JUNE 27.

The Crucifixion.

MARK xv. 29-34.

"AND they that passed by railed on Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself, and come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the Scribes, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him. And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Ps. xxii. 1.)[1]

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[1] . . . "Not only did the Lord Himself, by uttering the first words of that Psalm as He hung upon the Cross, bind that Psalm to the subject of the Crucifixion,—but all through, the very words of it are so wonderfully express, that they sound more like a hymn by St. John, describing what he saw when he stood by the Cross, than one of David, predicting, by the Holy Spirit, a thousand years before, what would happen so long afterwards. 'They pierced My hands and My feet. I may tell all My bones; they stand staring and looking upon Me. They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots.' How wonderful and how divine is all this! Written, sung, a thousand years before the Crucifixion, and yet describing with such exact minuteness the very things which took place at that time! . . . I can hardly give, to those who are in earnest to serve God, more useful and practical advice than to urge them to study and learn and use the Book of Psalms. . . . There is no state of feeling, no condition in life for which that wonderful book does not furnish the most exact and well-fitted expressions that can be conceived or desired. . . . Learn at least some of them by heart: the 3rd Psalm for the morning; the 4th Psalm for the evening; the 130th Psalm for midnight, to say as you lie, it may be, sleepless with pain or painful thoughts upon your bed; the 51st Psalm for Lent, or other times of penitence and distress for sin."—*"Brighstone Sermons," by Bishop Moberly.*

"O Thou Who, at the sixth hour of the sixth day of the week, didst nail the sins of the world with Thy Body to the Cross, blot out the handwriting of our sins, which is against us, and take it out of the way, and save us."

"O Thou, Who didst vouchsafe, about the ninth hour of the day, to taste death for the sins of every man, mortify in us our members which are upon the earth, even all things contrary to Thy holy Will, that we also may be crucified unto the world, and save us."—*Bishop Andrewes' "Devotions."*

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JUNE 28.

The Death on the Cross.

MARK xv. 37-41.

"AND Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost.[1] And the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. And when the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this Man was the Son of God. There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (who also, when He was in Galilee, followed Him, and ministered unto Him;) and many other women which came up with Him unto Jerusalem."

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[1] "Remember that you are a follower of this crucified Saviour. . . . Meditate often upon His shame and sacred sufferings (Heb. xii. 2, 3, etc.). Follow Him from the room of the Last Supper to the Garden of Gethsemane; to the house of Annas—of Caiaphas. Trace the meek footsteps of your God to the hall of Pilate; to the presence of Herod; back to Pilate again. Behold Him mocked, buffeted, spit upon; enduring to be struck without a murmur even by the servants. Listen to the scourging and stripes by which you were healed; see Him walking along the way of sorrows, bearing His Cross till He sunk exhausted under it. Yet in that extreme weakness, how strong in patience, in obedience to His Father's will, in love unspeakable! Amidst all this, hear Him taking care only for others: 'Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.' Behold Him at length on Calvary, stretched on a cross, nailed to it, hung up in the eyes of all, to die as a malefactor between two thieves. Yet see still His enduring patience and overflowing love; hear Him commend His Virgin Mother to the care of His beloved disciple, to soothe her declining years; hear Him promise Paradise to the penitent thief by His side; and since even this is not enough for His boundless love, hear Him pray for His very murderers: 'Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.' And then, when all His suffering and conflict were 'finished,' behold Him bow His head meekly, and give up the ghost. But dare not to look idly upon this most sacred, most awful sight; nor go back to the world as if you had not seen it. But gird yourself to 'take up your cross and follow' Jesus. Gird yourself to be more firm in patience, meekness, purity, love, forgivingness, obedience; guard against ways of self-pleasing; and be not content until you have determined upon secretly doing something which may be a self-denial to you; that so you may remember that eternal suffering is the reward of sin, and in some little way mortify your sinful nature, and try to copy in yourself the sufferings of Him Who died for you."—"*Ways of Overcoming Temptation.*"

"O raise my soul to Heaven above,
Where Thou dost ever intercede,
Thine all-prevailing Passion plead!"—*E. I.*

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JUNE 29.

The Great Commission.

MARK xvi. 14-18.

"AFTERWARD He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen. And He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;[1] but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs[2] shall follow them that believe; In My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

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[1] "The inward acceptance of the Gospel is not to be without the outward. Faith is not enough without sacramental grace. Indeed, it is hard to see how any one can humbly and faithfully believe, and yet refuse so plain an ordinance of Christ as Baptism."

[2] "These signs."] "Miraculous powers were largely conferred on the early Church for the confirmation of faith, and in witness of the divine origin of Christianity. Their end being accomplished, and Christianity firmly planted in the world, they were gradually withdrawn."—*Canon How.*

. . . "Are *we* doing what lies in our power, that His Name, and doctrine, and salvation, be proclaimed to the uttermost parts of the earth? Or are we looking coldly, indifferently on the Church's efforts in the cause of Missions, suffering her funds to fail, and her schemes to languish, and her devoted servants to sink in discouragement? Are we prepared to incur the responsibility of heathen souls, through our neglect, passing hour by hour into eternity, with a Saviour's Name unheard of, and a Saviour's love unknown? . . . Listen to the parting injunction of our Great Master. His last words, ere the cloud received Him to glory, were *Missionary* words, a *Missionary* appeal, a pleading for the Gospel being sent to heathen shores. Ah! *our own Britain* was then among the number! If the Apostolic Company had in those days, like many among ourselves, refused, on the ground of the *home-heathen* in Judæa, to send any of their band abroad, where would *we* have been at this hour? With our Druid's altars, our bloody sacrifices, our cruel rites!"—"*Memories of Bethany.*"

"Jesus, by Whom the worlds were made, claims a universal acknowledgment as the Redeemer of all. Yet must the proclamation of His work as Man amongst men be announced by man to men."—*Benson's "Benedictus Dominus."*

"Tidings, sent to every creature,
Millions yet have never heard;
Can they hear without a preacher?"

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JUNE 30.

The Ascension.

MARK xvi. 19, 20.

"AFTER the Lord had spoken unto them, He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."

"And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight" (Acts i. 9).[1]

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[1] "He *ascended!* Not in a chariot of fire, as if He had been sent for; He went up of His own will and by His own power; the consenting heavens received Him out of sight, without a sound to break the awful stillness. He Who came as never man came, went as never man went."—"*The Paraclete.*"

. . . "So the Church *saw* Him for the last time. So we think of Him and pray to Him, sitting on His throne in bodily form, as our brethren the Apostles saw Him disappear. But let it not be forgotten that while the ascension of Elijah may be compared to that of a bird which none can follow, that of Christ is a bridge between Heaven and earth, laid down for all who are united to Him."—*Rev. William Benham.*

"He is too high to be discerned, too bright to be seen with mortal eyes, since cherubims are dazzled at His splendour. He is gone to His proper place, and ascended thither, whither thy desires carry thee, and where ere long thou shalt see Him face to face. Thou standest like Elisha, looking after Him, and lamenting thy Master's departure; but He hath left His mantle behind Him, even the mysteries of the Holy Sacrament, which to thy faith is the Flesh which He was clothed withal, and is designed to convey a double portion of His Spirit unto thee."—*Dean Comber.*

. . . . "Over Him
Death could claim no dominion. In His might,
As Son of God, He rose; as Son of Man
Ascended up on high, and liveth there,
A Priest, a Friend, hereafter Lord and Judge."
—"*Lazarus and other Poems.*"

"We are told in Scripture never to think of our Lord as having gone away and left His Church, but always to think of Him as now occupying His throne in heaven, and thence ruling over all. . . . Let us worship Him in that seat in heaven as Judge and as Intercessor. As Judge Who sees into all hearts; and as Intercessor Who pleads our cause. Let us worship Him with fear and love, remembering both His insight into us and His compassion for us."—*Mozley's "University Sermons."*

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JULY 1.

"The Child Jesus."

LUKE ii. 41-51.

"NOW His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover. And when He was twelve years old, they went up to Jerusalem after the custom of the feast. And when they had fulfilled the days, as they returned, the Child Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and Joseph and His mother knew not of it. But they, supposing Him to have been in the company, went a day's journey; and they sought Him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance. And when they found Him not, they turned back again to Jerusalem, seeking Him. And it came to pass, that after three days they found Him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. And all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. And when they saw Him, they were amazed: and His mother said unto Him, Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing. And He said unto them, How is it that ye sought Me? wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?[1] And they understood not the saying which He spake unto them. And He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but His mother kept all these sayings in her heart."

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[1] "Always be about your Heavenly Father's business. Remember that you are a Christian, whatever you are about; and in your most common actions you can be improving in the great concern of your soul. 'Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.'"—"*Ways of Overcoming Temptation.*"

> "To do our 'Father's business' here
> In humble reverence and fear,
> Meekly upon His will to wait
> In little things as well as great,
> Contented in our lot to rest,
> 'Tis thus the Christian serves Him best."
>
> —*Monsell.*

"O Almighty God, Who didst send Thy Son in our nature to accomplish upon the earth Thy Holy Will for the deliverance of mankind, grant that I, . . . following the steps of His Incarnate Life, and resting in the sustaining power of His all-sufficient grace, may accomplish all that Thou wouldst have me to do, . . . through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."—*Benson's "Benedictus Dominus."*

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JULY 2.

The Conflict with Satan.

LUKE iv. 1-13.

"AND Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness, being forty days tempted of the devil. And in those days He did eat nothing: and when they were ended, He afterward hungered. And the devil said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, command this stone that it be made bread.[1] And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God (Deut. viii. 3). And the devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, showed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said unto Him, All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it. If Thou therefore wilt worship me, all shall be Thine. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Get thee behind Me, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve (Deut. vi. 13, and x. 20). And he brought Him to Jerusalem, and set Him on a pinnacle of the Temple, and said unto Him, If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down from hence: for it is written, He shall give His Angels charge over Thee, to keep Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone (Ps. xci. 11, 12). And Jesus answering said unto him, It is said, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God (Deut. vi. 16). And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from Him for a season."

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[1] . . . "Jesus, not only now, but all through His life on earth, steadfastly refused to Himself all mere display of His miraculous power; He did no miracle for His own fame or glory. In His encounter with Satan our Lord will contend *as Man*. . . . He could have summoned twelve legions of Angels, had He pleased, and swept the hateful tempter from His presence in a moment. But how then could He be our Pattern in fighting, or give us a pledge of conquering, as He conquered? He uses no weapons but those which He puts also into our hands. In the strength of the Holy Ghost, in prayer and fasting, in perfect trust in God, and with the 'sword of the Spirit,' He meets the enemy, and conquers him."—*Canon How.*

"Didst Thou, for forty days and nights,
All food and rest refuse?
How boastful then the soul that slights
What Thou didst deign to use!
When Thou didst so Thyself prepare,
Need we no fastings and no prayer?"—*Monsell.*

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JULY 3.

The Preacher in the Synagogue.

LUKE iv. 16-32.

"AND He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up: and, as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day, and stood up for to read. And there was delivered unto Him the Book of the Prophet Esaias. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the Gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord (Isa. lxi. 1, 2). And He closed the book, and He gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on Him. And He began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's Son? And He said unto them, Ye will surely say unto Me this proverb, Physician, heal Thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Thy country. And He said, Verily I say unto you, No prophet is accepted in his own country. But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; but unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Eliseus the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, saving Naaman the Syrian. And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up, and thrust Him out of the city, and led Him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast Him down headlong. But He passing through the midst of them went His way, and came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the Sabbath Days. And they were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power."[1]

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[1] "The Gospel doth not only represent the doctrine of Christ to be believed, but also the life of Christ to be followed; nor shall any have Him for their advocate and propitiation, but such as are willing to have Him for their pattern and example; to copy and imitate His humility, patience, purity, benignity, and self-resignation. None shall be benefited by His death, that are unwilling to live His life."—*Worthington.*

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JULY 4.

The Great Missionary.

LUKE iv. 33-36 and 42-44.

"IN the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou Jesus of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us? I know Thee Who Thou art; the Holy One of God. And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace,[1] and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not.[2] And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power He commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. . . . And when it was day, He departed and went into a desert place: and the people sought Him, and came unto Him, and stayed Him, that He should not depart from them. And He said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent. And He preached in the synagogues of Galilee."

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[1] "Hold thy peace."] "Christ will not accept the witness of evil. It might have been a stumblingblock to some, if He had suffered His power and His holiness to be proclaimed by devils, besides that many would have declared such witness to be lying witness."

[2] "Well does St. Peter describe our Lord's work, declaring 'how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power; Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him'" (Acts x. 38).—*Canon How.*

"Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Can we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?

Salvation! oh, salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till each remotest nation
Has learnt Messiah's Name.

Waft, waft, ye winds, His story,
And you, ye waters, roll,
Till like a sea of glory,
It spreads from pole to pole;

Till o'er our ransomed nature,
The Lamb, for sinners slain,
Redeemer, King, Creator,
In bliss returns to reign.
Amen."

"Be very faithful in serving our Master, but let your service be childlike and loving, free from all that is harsh and repulsive. Strive to maintain a holy gladness, which may shine forth in your words and actions, and be attractive to those around you, leading them to glorify God—our only aim."—"*Spiritual Letters of S. Francis de Sales.*"

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JULY 5.

The Draught of Fishes.

LUKE v. 3-10.

"AND He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me;[1] for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: and so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not;[2] from henceforth thou shalt catch men."[3]

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[1] . . . "A consciousness of God's nearness and power and purity will at first make the sinner fear. Yet fear will often lead to love, and Simon Peter soon found by a blessed experience that 'perfect love casteth out fear'" (1 John iv. 18).

[2] "Fear not."] "This was Christ's comforting answer to St. Peter's 'Depart from me.' When the shrinking from Christ springs from a self-accusing, self-condemning spirit, then He cheers and comforts, and bids us 'Fear not.'"

[3] "How would St. Peter be reminded of this miracle and its promise in the miraculous ingathering of three thousand souls on the day of Pentecost!" (Acts ii. 41.)—*Canon How.*

. . . "He, Whose purpose it was by the weak things of the world to confound the strong, Who meant to draw emperors to Himself by fishermen, and not fishermen by emperors, lest His Church should even seem to stand in the wisdom and power of men, rather than of God—He saw in these unlearned fishermen of the Galilean lake the fittest instruments for His work. . . . The Lord clothes His promise in the language of that art which was familiar to Peter; the fisherman is to *catch* men, as David, the shepherd, taken from among the sheepfolds, was to *feed* them (Ps. lxxviii. 71, 72). There is in these words a double magnifying of Peter's future occupation as compared with his past; that it is *men* and not poor fishes henceforth which he shall take; and that he shall take them *for life*, and not as he had taken his meaner prey, only for death."—*Trench "On the Miracles."*

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JULY 6.

The Leper's Faith.

LUKE v. 12-14.

"WHEN He was in a certain city, behold a man full of leprosy:[1] who seeing Jesus fell on his face, and besought Him, saying, Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean. And He put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean. And immediately the leprosy departed from him. And He charged him to tell no man: but go, and show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses[2] commanded, for a testimony unto them."

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[1] "Leprosy was nothing short of a living death, a poisoning of the springs, a corrupting of all the humours of life; a dissolution, little by little, of the whole body, so that one limb after another actually decayed and fell away." —*Trench "On the Miracles."*

"The lepers of old were driven out to live by themselves, and obliged to shun the society of sound and healthy persons. And we sinners should have been driven out from God's society for ever by the leprosy of our sins, were it not that Jesus Christ in our nature has been perfectly holy, and God, when we truly believe in Jesus, sets His holiness to our account."—*Goulburn's "Child Samuel."*

[2] Lev. xiv.

"Thine arm, O Lord, in days of old,
Was strong to heal and save;
It triumphed o'er disease and death,
O'er darkness and the grave;
To Thee they went, the blind, the dumb,
The palsied and the lame,
The leper with his tainted life,
The sick with fevered frame.

And lo! Thy touch brought life and health,
Gave speech, and strength, and sight;
And youth renewed and frenzy calmed
Owned Thee, the Lord of Light;
And now, O Lord, be near to bless,
Almighty as of yore,
In crowded street, by restless couch,
As by Gennesareth's shore.

Be Thou our great Deliverer still,
Thou Lord of life and death;
Restore and quicken, soothe and bless,
With Thine Almighty breath;
To hands that work, and eyes that see
Give wisdom's heavenly lore,
That whole and sick, and weak and strong,
May praise Thee evermore. Amen."—*E. H. P.*

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JULY 7.

Faith overcoming Difficulties.

LUKE v. 18-25.

"AND, behold, men brought in a bed a man which was taken with a palsy: and they sought means to bring him in, and to lay him before Him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling with his couch into the midst before Jesus.[1] And when He saw their faith, He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee. And the Scribes and the Pharisees began to reason, saying, Who is this Which speaketh blasphemies? Who can forgive sins, but God alone? But when Jesus perceived their thoughts, He answering said unto them, What reason ye in your hearts? Whether is easier, to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Rise up and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power upon earth to forgive sins, (He said unto the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house. And immediately he rose up before them, and took up that whereon he lay, and departed to his own house, glorifying God."

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[1] "The sight of that poor sufferer thus let down from above into the midst before Jesus must have been very moving; and the act of those who so brought him proved a real and living faith in Jesus, in His power, and in His willingness to save. . . . Would that there were more of this spirit amongst us—that there were more of us to whom religion and religious services were a pleasure and a delight, not a mere cold duty. Then excuses and difficulties would vanish, and contrivances take their place; the earnest wish would make itself a way, because it heartily desires its object. We want more of the mind of these men, who, finding all ordinary means of reaching Christ fail, devised an extraordinary one, and were by Him rewarded accordingly."—*Sermon by the Hon. and Rev. W. H. Lyttelton.*

"'Their faith' our true and loving Lord
Left upon record in His Word
All drooping souls to cheer,
And teach us how the trusting heart,
If it will only do its part,
Need never droop or fear.

Faint not, and fail not, only try,—
Since there is no extremity
For thy dear Lord too great;
Only be earnest, and in proof,—
Denied the door—break up the roof,
And on Thy Saviour wait."

—*Monsell.*

"All we do for the health of our bodies will perish; but all we do for the salvation of our souls is laid up in Heaven."—*Dr. Pusey.*

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Levi the Publican, or St. Matthew.

LUKE v. 27-32.

"AFTER these things He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow Me. And he left all, rose up, and followed Him.[1] And Levi made Him a great feast in his own house: and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them. But their Scribes and Pharisees murmured against His disciples, saying, Why do ye eat and drink with publicans and sinners? And Jesus answering said unto them, They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous,[2] but sinners to repentance."

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[1] "Few stars in the firmament of the Church shine brighter than that of St. Matthew, one of the twelve Apostles, and the Evangelist of what may be called the mother Gospel. And what was St. Matthew originally? A man conversant, not with rural, but with city life,—not with contemplation, but with business. Not an unsophisticated fisherman, like the rest of his colleagues, but a collector of taxes for the Roman Government; one who sat daily at the receipt of custom, driving a trade essentially secular. Yet God Incarnate crossed his path, and singled him out of the throng as one who should draw many souls, minted anew with the image and superscription of the Heavenly King, into the treasury of God, and sat at meat in his house in company with many publicans and sinners. . . . It is a great lesson that, if only our hearts are right and true, we may find Christ—or rather may be found of Him—in the traffic of secular affairs. May we so learn this lesson, as to know it, not in theory only, but by experience!"—*Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion."*

[2] "By the 'righteous' is plainly here meant those who thought themselves righteous, and by 'sinners' those who knew themselves to be sinners. 'A great encouragement to *sinners*,' says Archbishop Leighton, 'but no encouragement to *sin*. He came to call sinners, but it was to call them to repentance'—that is, to call them from their sins. Jesus saves, not only from the penalty, but also from the power, of sin."—*Canon How.*

"O grant us grace, that to Thy call
We may obedient be;
And, cheerfully forsaking all,
May follow only Thee."—*Monsell.*

. . . "For God's Glory, accept His Will entirely, and never suppose that you could serve Him better in any other way. You can never serve Him well, save in the way He chooses."

"The years go by, and Eternity draws near. May we so spend these years in His Love, as to spend Eternity in His Glory."—"*Spiritual Letters of S. Francis de Sales.*"

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JULY 9.

Ordinances.

LUKE v. 33-39.

"AND they said unto Him, Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but Thine eat and drink? And He said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.[1] And He spake also a parable unto them; No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old; if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles, and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new; for he saith, The old is better."

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[1] . . . "Christ would not 'discourage in His followers either stated hours of prayer, or stated fasts such as the Church enjoins. Only He would discourage the *formal* observance of such, and show, as in the case of the observance of the Sabbath, that ordinances, good in themselves, must be governed by the higher laws of a more spiritual religion.'"—*Canon How.*

"A main part of the spiritual conflict consists in the subduing the body, so that the soul may not be polluted by the lusts of the flesh. Self-denial, hard work, uniform moderation in eating, drinking, sleeping, occasional fasting, have ever been accounted good instruments, coupled with frequent and earnest prayer, for this subjugation of the body. So our own Church has preserved the great fast of Lent, as well as other seasons of abstinence, not as mere ceremonial observances, but to aid us by periodical foregoings of even lawful pleasures in bringing the body into subjection" (1 Cor. ix. 27).—*Canon Woodford.*

. . . "Never imagine that you have got above the use of ordinances, or that it is of no profit to attend upon them: they are the golden pipes through which, to your latest hour, you must receive the golden oil into your lamps; and through the supplies of the Spirit which you may receive by them, you may hope that your path shall shine brighter and brighter unto the perfect day."—*Simeon.*

"Yet on those blessed means of grace
Our souls must not depend;
Theirs simply is the handmaid place
Of means unto an end.

But used in faith, with grace they teem
For every troubled mind,
As to the leper Jordan's stream,
As Siloam to the blind."

—*Monsell.*

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JULY 10.

The Lord of the Sabbath.

LUKE vi. 1-10.

"IT came to pass on the second Sabbath after the first, that He went through the corn-fields; and His disciples plucked the ears of corn, and did eat, rubbing them in their hands. And certain of the Pharisees said unto them, Why do ye that which is not lawful to do on the Sabbath Days? And Jesus answering them said, Have ye not read so much as this, what David did, when himself was an hungered, and they which were with him; how he went into the House of God, and did take and eat the shewbread, and gave also to them that were with him; which it is not lawful to eat but for the priests alone? And He said unto them, That the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath. And it came to pass also on another Sabbath, that He entered into the synagogue and taught: and there was a man whose right hand was withered. And the Scribes and Pharisees watched Him, whether He would heal on the Sabbath Day; that they might find an accusation against Him. But He knew their thoughts, and said to the man which had the withered hand, Rise up, and stand forth in the midst. And he arose and stood forth. Then said Jesus unto them, I will ask you one thing; Is it lawful on the Sabbath Days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it? And looking round about upon them all, He said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand.[1] And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other."

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[1] "Our Lord bade him stretch forth his hand, just as He bids us, when we present ourselves before Him in His House of prayer, to stretch forth the open hand of faith, that He may drop into it some blessing from the storehouse of His bounty. But what was the meaning of bidding a man with a withered hand to stretch it forth? It was a dry hand, a hand in which no blood circulated, a hand which laboured under a physical incapacity of unrolling its palm. Oh true emblem of this soul, in which all action towards God seems dead, and whose powers at present are all numbed and paralyzed! Yet He says to me, as to the man in the synagogue of old, 'Stretch forth thy hand.' The meaning for me is what it was for him—Rouse the will for an effort. . . . It is only in making the effort to pray that His power will visit me. Let Him see me making the effort patiently and persistently, and He will give me the needful help."—*Goulburn's "Cathedral System."*

Help us, O Lord, to raise our hearts to Thee;
Keep us from evil thoughts and censure free.—*E. P.*

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Blessings and Woes.

LUKE vi. 20-26.

"AND He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said, Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the Prophets. But woe unto you that are rich![1] for ye have received your consolation. Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger. Woe unto you that laugh now! for ye shall mourn and weep. Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you![2] for so did their fathers to the false prophets."

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[1] "We hear Him say, 'Woe unto you that are rich, for ye have received your consolation,' and yet we make wealth our guest and confidence. He tells us further, 'Blessed are ye that weep,' but we reject the gracious lesson. Weep, Christian, weep. Mourn for the danger of man's estate, mourn for the levity and licentiousness of the world. Mourn for thyself and for thy fellow-men. Within and without, all is 'vexation of spirit,' temptation and sin. . . . Blessed is the grief that grace inspires, that weans us from transient and destructive joys, and that gives the hope and antepast of eternal happiness." —*Fénelon.*

[2] . . . "This fourth woe should be a special warning to all Christian ministers against the peril of popularity. There is a middle course, which the Christian will seek to keep, between courting persecution and courting popularity. If pride and obstinacy are dangers on one side, on the other side there may be a carelessness as to the truth, an easy compliance with the low standard of the world, a shrinking from duties which would be unpopular in their performance. The right course is humbly to seek to know and to do God's will, not on the one side needlessly offending a weak brother, nor on the other side shrinking from what is right through fear of man."—*Canon How.*

"Happy are those alone who aim
In duty's quiet path to shine,
And, careless of the meed of fame,
Unseen their fairest garlands twine;
Whilst He Whose Eye in secret sees,
To them the meed of praise decrees."

—*S. M. Waring.*

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JULY 12.

The Christian's Duty.

LUKE vi. 27-36.

"BUT I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful."[1]

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[1] "Feed the hungry, clothe the naked, take the homeless wanderer in,
Seek the dark abode of sorrow, and the drearier haunt of sin;
Let it be thy life's endeavour some poor soul from death to win.

Share thy bottle with the thirsty, dry the lonesome widow's tears,
Bind the bleeding broken-hearted, smile away the orphan's fears;
Tell them there's a good time coming, when the Lord of Life appears.

Do the duty Love has set thee, thy best warrant His command;
Sin and sorrow, in a thousand touching aspects, round thee stand—
Do it promptly, do it bravely, whatsoever comes to hand.

Do it in the post assigned thee; in the rear or in the van
Of the noble Christian army do thy utmost, play the man;
Not how much, or how, the question—is each doing what he can?

Many a simple deed of kindness, which the world's praise ne'er won,
Wrought in silence, done in secret, never meant to see the sun,
Bright will shine with His approval—'Faithful servant, nobly done!'"

—*F. W. H.*

"Human vengeance retaliates wrong for wrong; heavenly, repays but love."
—*Paulin.*

"He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shown no mercy" (James ii. 13).

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JULY 13.

"The Blind leading the Blind."

LUKE vi. 37-42.

"JUDGE not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven: give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again. And He spake a parable unto them, Can the blind lead the blind?[1] shall they not both fall into the ditch? The disciple is not above his master:[2] but every one that is perfect shall be as his master. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Either how canst thou say to thy brother, Brother, let me pull out the mote that is in thine eye, when thou thyself beholdest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, cast out first the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye."[3]

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[1] "This 'parable' is spoken on another occasion concerning the false teaching of the Pharisees (*see* Matt. xv. 14). Here it seems used as a warning to the disciples that, if they would guide others safely, they must take care that they are themselves well instructed in the truth."

[2] "This is a saying repeated by our Lord on several occasions, and with different applications. Here it seems closely connected with the saying as to the blind leading the blind, and would thus mean, You cannot expect the disciple to escape where the master falls, for the disciple is not likely to be better instructed than his master. The best and most perfect disciple is only equal to his master; he can learn no more than his master can teach. Therefore be careful to gain wisdom to enable you to lead your disciples aright. In the latter part of the verse we may perhaps suppose our Lord to convey a double meaning, namely, that the disciples must not only take care to excel their own pupils, if they would be safe teachers and guides, but also remember that they are themselves but pupils of the One Great Master, Whom they must ever strive to imitate. The best guide of others is he who most closely follows Christ; the best master is the best disciple."—*Canon How.*

[3] "Would I lead another right?
Lord, I first must walk with Thee;
Would I help another's sight?
Mine from blemish must be free."—*Monsell.*

"Lord, write all these Thy laws in our hearts, we beseech Thee."

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Hearers and Doers of the Word.

LUKE vi. 43-49.

"FOR a good tree bringeth not forth corrupt fruit; neither doth a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. For every tree is known by his own fruit. For of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh. And why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to Me, and heareth My sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."[1]

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[1] "There are many persons who seem to be serving God, whose lives appear outwardly fair enough, but who, in His eyes, 'Who seeth not as man seeth, but looketh on the heart' and knows its inmost thoughts, are but barren trees; bearing, indeed, the leaves of profession, but yielding no real fruit of good works; having a show or form of godliness, but by their lives denying the power thereof. Are you like one of these, or are you bringing forth good fruit? Are you contented with saying and seeming, or are you 'doers of the Word, not hearers only, deceiving your own selves?'" (James i. 22.)—"*Parish Magazine.*"

"A neglected message makes the case of him who neglects it worse than if he had never received it. . . . Receive religious teaching with a deep feeling of seriousness, and of the grave responsibility which it lays upon him who receives, no less than upon him who communicates it. Hold before you constantly the great truth, that where there is no life there is no growth; and that growth is not made by fits and starts, by excitements and impulses, but by taking in, digesting, and assimilating suitable nourishment. You will be safe, if you are growing;—safe from the fatal mistake, made by so many, of confounding interest about religious questions with interest in religion. Therefore 'grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.'"—*Goulburn's "Farewell Counsels."*

"We shall be judged hereafter as surely for the neglect of the due use of the ear, as we shall for the undue use of the tongue" (*see* John xii. 48).—*Rev. James Hildyard.*

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JULY 15.

Faith and Humility.

LUKE vii. 2-10.

"A CERTAIN centurion's servant, who was dear unto him, was sick, and ready to die. And when he heard of Jesus, he sent unto Him the elders of the Jews, beseeching Him that He would come and heal his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they besought Him instantly, saying, That he was worthy for whom He should do this: for he loveth our nation, and he hath built us a synagogue. Then Jesus went with them. And when He was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying unto Him, Lord, trouble not Thyself: for I am not worthy that Thou shouldest enter under my roof:[1] wherefore neither thought I myself worthy to come unto Thee: but say in a word, and my servant shall be healed. For I also am a man set under authority, having under me soldiers, and I say unto one, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it. When Jesus heard these things, He marvelled at him, and turned Him about, and said unto the people that followed Him, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.[2] And they that were sent, returning to the house, found the servant whole that had been sick."

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[1] St. Augustine says, "In declaring himself unworthy that Christ should enter within his walls, he proved himself worthy that Christ should enter within his heart." And again, "The lowlier a man is, the more he can contain. The hills throw off the water; the valleys are filled."

[2] "How self-deceived we are! They who have less privileges we despise; but how often they are better than us! Good Lord, pardon my sins, my want of faith and obedience. Give me all I need, and withal a humble mind" (Phil. ii. 3).—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

"Want felt, and help desired, with faith to obtain it, is prayer; and without these qualifications whatever is called so is nothing but self-deceit and lying to God."—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

"Blest are the poor in spirit, vile and low
In their own eyes, who their own frailties know,
Who on God's grace, not their own merits, lean,
And like the leper, style themselves 'unclean.'
The humblest here are highest in God's sight,
Theirs is the glorious realm of endless light."—*Bishop Ken.*

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The Widow's Son.

LUKE vii. 11-15.

"IT came to pass the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and much people. Now when He came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And He came and touched the bier: and they that bare him stood still. And He said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise.[1] And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And He delivered him to his mother."[2]

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[1] "Mark the authority with which our Lord commands the dead to arise. So to Jairus's daughter, 'Maid, arise' (Luke viii. 54), and to Lazarus, 'Lazarus, come forth' (John xi. 43). It is very different with those who in the Old Testament were permitted to raise the dead, and who did so not without strong wrestlings for heavenly aid." *See* 1 Kings xvii. 20, 21; 2 Kings iv. 33, 34.

[2] "He delivered him to his mother."] "May we not in this see a dim foreshadowing of the great Resurrection in which the same Divine Lord will deliver to each other those of His redeemed whom death has parted here below, uniting them for ever in His heavenly kingdom?"—*Canon How.*

"Thus spake He,—'Weep no more!
Be still, sad heart! Be dry, ye moistened eyes!
Thus to the living I the dead restore.
Sleeper, awake, arise!'

Then at His bidding came
To those cold lips the warm, returning breath;
Then did He kindle life's extinguished flame,
Victor o'er Sin and Death.

And thus He ever stands—
Friend of the fallen, wiping all tears away;
Wherever Sorrow lifts her suppliant hands,
And Faith remains to pray.

Where'er the wretched flee,
From the rude conflict of this world distrest,
Consoling words He whispers,—'Come to Me,
And I will give you rest!'"

—*W. R. Neale.*

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JULY 17.

Christ's Message to St. John the Baptist.

LUKE vii. 19-23.

"AND John calling unto him two of his disciples sent them to Jesus, saying, Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another? When the men were come unto Him, they said, John Baptist hath sent us unto Thee, saying, Art Thou He that should come? or look we for another?[1] And in that same hour He cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind He gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the Gospel is preached. And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me."

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[1] "Jesus did not directly answer the question. He showed the messengers, He let them see with their own eyes, some of the works of which hitherto they had only heard by the hearing of the ear. And then, with a reference to the 61st chapter of Isaiah, He bade them take back to their master the message, that blind men saw, and lame walked, and lepers were cleansed, and deaf heard, and dead were raised; and above all, and more than all, that to the poor the glad tidings were being preached; and then, we can imagine with how deep a tenderness, He added, 'And blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me'—blessed (that is) he who shall trust Me, even in spite of sorrow and persecution—he who shall believe that I know to the utmost the will of Him that sent Me, and how and when to finish His work. We may easily suppose, though nothing more is told us,—that the disciples did not depart without receiving from Jesus other words of private affection and encouragement for the grand prisoner whose end was now so nearly approaching—words which would be to him sweeter than the honey which had sustained his hunger in the wilderness, dearer than water-springs in the dry ground."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"At even, ere the sun was set,
The sick, O Lord, around Thee lay;
Oh, in what divers pains they met!
Oh, with what joy they went away!"

"Cherish in your heart the love of God, the thought of His Presence. . . . Seek for grace to bear patiently the little crosses which everyday life brings with it; to endure, without murmuring or even talking of them, the pains of body and sense of weakness which come to you . . . the disappointments of common life. . . . By and by you shall see that all these things have worked together to bring you where He is."—*Rev. W. H. Ridley.*

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The Fulfilment of Malachi's Prophecy.

LUKE vii. 24-35.

"WHEN the messengers of John were departed, He began to speak unto the people concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness for to see? A reed shaken with the wind? But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? Behold, they which are gorgeously apparelled, and live delicately, are in kings' courts. But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? Yea, I say unto you, and much more than a prophet. This is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee (Mal. iii. 1). For I say unto you, Among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he. And all the people that heard Him, and the publicans, justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. And the Lord said, Whereunto then shall I liken the men of this generation? and to what are they like? They are like unto children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept. For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine; and ye say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man is come eating and drinking; and ye say, Behold a gluttonous man, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners! But wisdom is justified of all her children."

"No sooner had the disciples departed, than He Who would not seem to be guilty of idle flattery, but yet wished to prevent His hearers from cherishing one depreciatory thought of the great Prophet of the Desert, uttered over His friend and Forerunner, in language of perfect loveliness, the memorable eulogy, that he was indeed the promised Voice in the new dawn of a nobler day, the greatest of all God's herald messengers—the Elias who, according to the last word of ancient prophecy, was to precede the Advent of the Messiah, and to prepare His way. . . . Many who heard these words, and especially the publicans and those who were scorned as 'the people of the earth,' accepted with joy and gratitude this approbation of their confidence in John. But there were others, the accredited teachers of the written and oral Law, who listened to such words with contemptuous dislike. Struck with these contrasts, Jesus drew an illustration from peevish children who fretfully reject every effort of their fellows to delight or to amuse them. Nothing could please such soured and rebellious natures. The flute and dance of the little ones who played at weddings charmed them as little as the long wail of the simulated funeral."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Keep us, O Lord, from a discontented, murmuring, and a rebellious spirit!"

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JULY 19.

The Penitent Sinner.

LUKE vii. 37-50.

"A WOMAN in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden Him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This Man, if He were a Prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth Him: for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell Me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And He said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And He turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest Me no water for My feet: but she hath washed My feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest Me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss My feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed My feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And He said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with Him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And He said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

"If a man *has* really sinned but little, compared with others who have been grievous sinners, let him confess that it is a still greater debt that he owes for sins *prevented* by God's love and mercy, than if he had committed them and been forgiven."—*St. Augustine.*

"Naught can I bring, dear Lord, for all I owe,
Yet let my full heart what it can bestow;
Like Mary's gift let my devotion prove,
Forgiven greatly, how I greatly love. Amen."—*Rev. S. J. Stone.*

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JULY 20.

The Seed.

LUKE viii. 4-15.

"WHEN much people were gathered together, and were come to Him out of every city, He spake by a parable: A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it. And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it. And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit an hundredfold. And when He had said these things, He cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear. And His disciples asked Him, saying, What might this parable be? And He said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the Word of God. Those by the wayside are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the Word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the Word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.[1] And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life,[2] and bring no fruit to perfection. But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the Word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience."[3]

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[1] "Archbishop Trench suggests a beautiful thought here, namely, that as the hot sun, which scorches and destroys the shallow-rooted plant, only helps to ripen and perfect the strong and deep-rooted, so temptations—'tribulation or persecution' (St. Matthew)—which cause the shallow, unstable man to fall, only strengthen the faith and perfect the character of the true Christian."

[2] How many a fair promise is brought to nought by the rampant weeds of the "cares and riches and pleasures of this life"!

[3] *See* Rom. ii. 7. . . . "The fruit of holy living must be a perpetual, a never-failing fruit. It is not enough to produce one crop, and then to fall back, and become unfruitful."—*Canon How.*

"O Lord Jesu Christ, the heavenly Sower, Who sowest the Word, bless me Thy servant, I beseech Thee, and sow the seed of eternal life in my heart; that whatsoever in Thy Holy Word I shall profitably learn, I may in deed fulfil the same. Look, O Lord, mercifully upon me from heaven, and bless me. Let Thy fatherly hand ever be over me; let Thy Holy Spirit ever be with me; and so lead me day by day both in the knowledge and obedience of Thy Word, that in the end I may obtain everlasting life, through Thy mercy and merits, Who livest and reignest with the Father and the Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end. Amen."—*Goulburn's "Child Samuel."*

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JULY 21.

Hearing the Word of God.

LUKE viii. 16-21.

"NO man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither anything hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath, to him shall be given; and whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.[1] Then came to Him His mother and His brethren, and could not come at Him for the press. And it was told Him by certain which said, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to see Thee. And He answered and said unto them, My mother and My brethren[2] are these which hear the Word of God, and do it."

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[1] "That which he seemeth to have."] "The truth, or knowledge, or privilege, which he seemed to possess, but which was not his own, for, when he failed to use it, it was taken away. This is ever the law of God's gifts. If they are not used, they are taken away."—*Canon How.*

"We should pray, before listening to a sermon, both for ourselves, and for him who is to deliver it,—for him, that he may rightly divide the Word of Truth—for ourselves, that God would 'give us increase of grace, to hear meekly His Word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.' How completely would such a prayer, if offered from the very depths of the heart, bar all curious, as well as all listless hearing, and all censorship of the preacher! If sermons were always approached in a spirit of prayer, how many of them, which are now quite barren, would become powerful means of grace, however indifferent they might be as compositions."

. . . "Imbibe religious truth gradually. . . . A little studied, and pondered, and reduced to practice, is vastly more advantageous than a great deal, and a great variety, superficially received."—*Goulburn's "Farewell Counsels."*

[2] "This relationship to Christ is open to every one of us by simply listening to God's Word, and then putting it into practice."—*Goulburn's "Gospel of the Childhood."*

"Labour not only to become more familiar with Holy Scripture, but that you aim at bringing it as a real restraining power into your daily life. Read it with reference to daily life. Fix in your mind, for each day, some great promise, some great threatening, some great principle. . . . Think of it again and again as the work of the day goes on. Apply it in your work. Place it side by side with your practice" (*see* 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17).—*Rev. Francis Morse.*

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The Storm and the Calm.

LUKE viii. 22-25.

"IT came to pass on a certain day, that He went into a ship with His disciples: and He said unto them, Let us go over unto the other side of the lake. And they launched forth. But as they sailed He fell asleep: and there came down a storm of wind on the lake; and they were filled with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, Master, Master, we perish. Then He arose, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water: and they ceased, and there was a calm.[1] And He said unto them, Where is your faith?"

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[1] "In the hour of her wildest uproar, Nature yielded obedience unto Him, Who was come to reassert man's dominion over her, and over the evil powers which held her in thrall. . . . And His *word* was sufficient for this; He needed not, as Moses, to stretch a rod over the deep; He needed not, as His servant had needed, an instrument of power foreign to Himself with which to do His mighty work; but only at His word, 'the wind ceased, and there was a great calm.'"—*Trench "On the Miracles."*

"When ease and quiet are our lot,
Our hearts grow hard and cold;
Our God and all His love forgot,
We wander from His fold;
But when His tempests sweep our sky,
His wrath we dare not brave;
We stoop beneath the blast, and cry,
'Arise, our God, and save!'

Lord, grant that ever in my breast
Such dread of sin may be,
That I may never dream of rest
Or peace, except in Thee;
That 'neath the calmest, brightest sky
Thy mercy ever gave,
This heart may dread sin's storm, and cry,
'Arise, my God, and save!'"
—"*Parish Musings.*"

"Believer! art thou in trial, beaten down with a great fight of afflictions—like the disciples, out in a midnight of storm, buffeting a sea of trouble? Fear not! When the tempest has done its work—when the trial has fulfilled its embassy, the Voice which hushed the waters of old has only to give forth the omnipotent mandate, 'Peace, be still!' and immediately there will be a great calm."—"*The Night Watches.*"

"He to thy every trial knows its just restraint to give;
Attentive to behold thy woes, and faithful to relieve.
Though griefs unnumbered throng thee round, still in thy God confide,
Whose finger marks the seas their bound, and curbs the swelling tide."
—*Merrick.*

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JULY 23.

The Gadarene Demoniac.

LUKE viii. 27-33 and 38, 39.

"THERE met Him out of the city (Gadara) a certain man, which had devils long time, and ware no clothes, neither abode in any house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, What have I to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God most high? I beseech Thee, torment me not.[1] (For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For oftentimes it had caught him: and he was kept bound with chains and in fetters; and he brake the bands, and was driven of the devil into the wilderness.) And Jesus asked him, saying, What is thy name? And he said, Legion: because many devils were entered into him. And they besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the deep.[2] And there was there an herd of many swine feeding on the mountain: and they besought Him that He would suffer them to enter into them. And He suffered them. Then went the devils out of the man, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked. . . . Now the man out of whom the devils were departed besought Him that he might be with Him: but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to thine own house, and show how great things God hath done unto thee.[3] And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him."

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[1] "The very presence of Jesus is pain and terror to the evil spirits. So will it be in the last great day to all those who have taken their part with the Prince of evil, and rejected Christ here."

[2] "The word translated 'the deep' means literally 'the abyss.' It is the same word which in the Revelation is translated 'bottomless pit' (Rev. ix. 11, xx. 3). We must guard against supposing that it means the sea (as in Ps. cvii. 24)."

[3] . . . "Observe the mercy of Jesus. Though the Gadarenes pray Him to depart (ver. 37), He will not leave them without a witness. He sends them a preacher to bring them to a better mind. The man so marvellously cured must go and make known the mercy shown him till his friends and neighbours learn to desire the blessings they have put from them. . . . Thus he, who so lately uttered hideous cries which scared all who came near, now tells to wondering ears the blessed news of a Deliverer."—*Canon How.*

"O teach *me*, Lord, that I may teach,
The precious things Thou dost impart;
And wing my words, that they may reach
The hidden depth of many a heart."

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JULY 24.

Disease Cured and Life Restored.

LUKE viii. 41-56.

"THERE came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue: and he fell down at Jesus' feet, and besought Him that He would come into his house: for he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a-dying. But as He went the people thronged Him. And a woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be healed of any, came behind Him, and touched the border of His garment: and immediately her issue of blood stanched. And Jesus said, Who touched Me? When all denied, Peter and they that were with Him said, Master, the multitude throng Thee and press Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me? And Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me. And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him before all the people for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately. And He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace. While He yet spake, there cometh one from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, Thy daughter is dead; trouble not the Master. But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole. And when He came into the house, He suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and the mother of the maiden. And all wept, and bewailed her: but He said, Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And He put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and He commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished: but He charged them that they should tell no man what was done."[1]

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[1] . . . "He made the woman whom He cured confess her disease and relief before all the people; here He forbids all mention of the wonderful deliverance." . . . They were to ponder over it, . . . that it should be the means of leading them to a truer knowledge of Him Who, by raising the dead body of their daughter to life, gave them a sign of His power to raise their souls dead in sins to newness of life. . . . We are not forbidden to seek the sympathy of friends . . . but we are not to gossip about our trouble, to make it the means of exalting us in the estimation of our fellow-creatures, raising us into objects of interest, and thus increasing our self-consequence. . . . How often is the effect of a solemn sermon neutralized by mere talk about it. . . . The great want of the present day is quietness and spiritual meditation. There is too much talk and too little thought."—"*Our Lord's Three Raisings from the Dead*," *by the Rev. Hugh Macmillan.*

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JULY 25.

The Providence of God.

LUKE ix. 1-5 and 12-17.

"THEN He called His twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And He sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick. And He said unto them, Take nothing for your journey, neither staves, nor scrip, neither bread, neither money; neither have two coats apiece.[1] And whatsoever house ye enter into, there abide, and thence depart. And whosoever will not receive you, when ye go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet for a testimony against them.[2] . . . And when the day began to wear away, then came the twelve, and said unto Him, Send the multitude away, that they may go into the towns and country round about, and lodge, and get victuals: for we are here in a desert place. But He said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they said, We have no more but five loaves and two fishes; except we should go and buy meat for all this people. For they were about five thousand men. And He said to His disciples, Make them sit down by fifties in a company. And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples to set before the multitude. And they did eat, and were all filled: and there was taken up of fragments that remained to them twelve baskets."

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[1] "Encumber not yourselves with much provision of money, victuals, or apparel; but trust to the special providence of God on this extraordinary occasion."—*Bishop Mann.*

"The instructions here given concern only the first mission of the Apostles; they are revoked at Luke xxii. 36."—*Beausobre.*

[2] "Thereby signifying and declaring, that, since God has by you offered to them the gracious means of salvation, and they have wilfully rejected it, and judged themselves unworthy of it, ye can have nothing more to do with them, but must leave them to His just judgments."—*Dr. S. Clark.*

"Let not any confidence in ourselves provoke Thee, O God, to leave us to ourselves. . . . May I show by my life that God is my Father."

"God has more ways of providing for us, of helping us, than we can possibly imagine; it is infidelity to desire to confine Him to our ways and methods."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Twelve baskets full of fragments, left
The miracle to prove—
Were gathered up, to teach mankind
The Providence of Love."—*Monsell.*

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The Cross must be taken up Daily.

LUKE ix. 18-27.

"IT came to pass, as He was alone praying, His disciples were with Him: and He asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am? They answering said, John the Baptist; but some say, Elias; and others say, that one of the old Prophets is risen again. He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Peter answering said, The Christ of God. And He straitly charged them, and commanded them to tell no man that thing; saying, The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief priests and Scribes, and be slain, and be raised the third day. And He said to them all, If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily,[1] and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for My sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away? For whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy Angels.[2] But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God."

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[1] "Daily."] "This word, full of instruction as it is, is only given by St. Luke. It teaches us that the bearing of the Cross is not alone the patient enduring of suffering, when sent to us, but also a continual, *daily* self-sacrifice for our Lord's sake. It is well that we should ask ourselves, What do I give up for my Lord's sake? Is there any *daily* taking up of the Cross? Nay, is there any taking of it up at all?"—*Canon How.*

"Give me, O Lord, whate'er my lot may be,
A heart to look to and to lean on Thee;
Teach me the thing that pleaseth Thee to do,
And make my life to my profession true!"—*J. S. B. M.*

[2] "The priceless value of a man's real *life* will be proved when Christ comes to judge the world."—*Canon How.*

"In little things of common life,
There lies the Christian's noblest strife—
When he does conscience make,
Of every thought and throb within,
And words and looks of self and sin
Crushes for Jesus' sake."—*Monsell.*

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JULY 27.

A "Faithless Generation."

LUKE ix. 38-45.

"AND, behold, a man of the company cried out, saying, Master, I beseech Thee, look upon my son: for he is mine only child. And, lo, a spirit taketh him, and he suddenly crieth out; and it teareth him that he foameth again, and bruising him hardly departeth from him. And I besought Thy disciples to cast him out; and they could not. And Jesus answering said, O faithless and perverse generation,[1] how long shall I be with you, and suffer you? Bring thy son hither. And as he was yet a-coming, the devil threw him down, and tare him. And Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and healed the child, and delivered him again to his father. And they were all amazed at the mighty power of God. But while they wondered every one at all things which Jesus did, He said unto His disciples, Let these sayings sink down into your ears: for the Son of Man shall be delivered into the hands of men. But they understood not this saying,[2] and it was hid from them, that they perceived it not: and they feared to ask Him of that saying."

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[1] "This sorrowful rebuke seems to belong to the whole number present, and indeed to the whole Jewish people, of whom they were but samples. It is the expression of a holy grief and pain at the want of faith in man. But though not spoken only to the Apostles, it undoubtedly includes them; for it was *they* who at the moment most showed that want of faith."—*Canon How.*

"Judge yourselves. Ye have the knowledge of God set before you in a thousand different ways: ye have His Word and Sacraments, ye have His ministers, the promise of His Spirit. Ye have no obscure types to interpret; ye fear no persecutions. . . . What then shall you say for yourselves, if Christ see not in you, in every one of you, of the travail of His soul!"—*G. A. Poole.*

"Grant, O God, that I may so perfectly and without all doubt believe in Thy Son Jesus Christ, that my faith in Thy sight may never be reproved, for the sake of the same Jesus Christ."—*Bishop Wilson.*

[2] "His words, laid up in the memory, were to many that heard Him like the money of another country, unavailable, it might be, for present use,—of which they knew not the value, and only dimly knew that it had a value, but which yet was ready in their hand, when they reached that land, and were naturalized in it. When the Spirit came, and brought all things to their remembrance, then He filled all the outlines of truth which they before possessed with its substance—quickened all its forms with the power and spirit of life. Not perhaps at once, but gradually, the meanings of what they had heard unfolded themselves to them."—*Archbishop Trench.*

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The Teaching of the Saviour.

LUKE ix. 46-56.

"THEN there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by Him, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in My Name receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me:[1] for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great. And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us. And it came to pass, when the time was come that He should be received up, He stedfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for Him. And they did not receive Him, because His face was as though He would go to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt Thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But He turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of Man is not come to destroy[2] men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village."

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[1] "Him that sent Me."] "That is, God Himself. The blessing cannot go higher. He who in love receives even a little child, receives (in that blessed fellowship by which God's children are said to be in Him, and He in them), that God, Who is 'Love.'"

[2] "Not come to destroy."] "How gently and patiently, then, should His sinful servants deal with the erring and ignorant! . . . We may well notice that one of these two brothers, who would now have called down fire from heaven to destroy these Samaritans, afterwards went with his fellow-apostle St. Peter to call down upon the people of Samaria the fire of the Holy Ghost to save them" (*see* Acts viii. 14-17).—*Canon How.*

"Gentle thoughts and gentle words
Ever were thy Saviour Lord's;
Shall the fellow-worm reprove,
When the holy God is—Love?

He, Who knew the thoughts of men,
He was gentle; let us then
Gentle be in thought and tone—
We, who scarce can read our own."—*Monsell.*

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Followers of Christ.

LUKE ix. 57-62.

"AND it came to pass, that, as they went in the way, a certain man said unto Him, Lord, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest. And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.[1] And He said unto another, Follow Me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God. And another also said, Lord, I will follow Thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house. And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."[2]

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[1] "Birds have their quiet nest,
Foxes their holes, and man his peaceful bed;
All creatures have their rest,
But Jesus had not where to lay His Head."
—"*Christian Lyrics.*"

. . . "Such is the picture we have of the human life of the Son of God. Yet even these words of Christ 'do not come out to us in all their depth of meaning till we realize that hour when upon His Cross He bowed His Head, not having where to lay it, and having bowed it thus, gave up the ghost.'"—*Archbishop Trench, quoted by Canon How.*

[2] "It was an innocent—nay, in itself, a right thing—which this man wished to do. Under ordinary circumstances our Lord would certainly have approved of such a token of affection for his own family as he desired to show. But doubtless our Lord saw in the man's heart, and probably in his manner too, a backwardness, and shrinking from the work, which drew out the warning here given. . . . There must be no backward looks (like those of Lot's wife); only a stedfast, unflinching eye to the work of the great Master."—*Canon How.*

"Onward, ever onward,
Journeying o'er the road
Worn by saints before us,
Journeying on to God;
Leaving all behind us,
May we hasten on,
Backward never looking
Till the prize is won."

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JULY 30.

The Seventy sent forth.

LUKE x. 1-16.

"AFTER these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before His face into every city and place, whither He Himself would come. Therefore said He unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that He would send forth labourers into His harvest. Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves. Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way. And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again. And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house. And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you: and heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you not, go your ways out into the streets of the same, and say, Even the very dust of your city, which cleaveth on us, we do wipe off against you: notwithstanding be ye sure of this, that the kingdom of God is come nigh unto you. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable in that day for Sodom, than for that city. Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, which have been done in you, they had a great while ago repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted to heaven, shall be thrust down to hell. He that heareth you heareth Me;[1] and he that despiseth you despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me despiseth Him that sent Me."

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[1] "Those who are sent of God have His authority. They are His ambassadors. We may not safely neglect them. Obedience would be a less trial to us if we saw in them, not man, but God in man speaking."—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

"So age by age, and year by year,
His grace was handed on;
And still the holy Church is here,
Although her Lord is gone.
Let those find pardon, Lord, from Thee,
Whose love to her is cold:
Bring wanderers in, and let there be
One Shepherd and one fold.
Amen."

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Return of the Seventy.

LUKE x. 17-24.

"AND the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through Thy Name. And He said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven. Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you;[1] but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit,[2] and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered to Me of My Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father: and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him. And He turned Him unto His disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see: for I tell you, that many Prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

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[1] "Here is the gentle rebuke which our Lord utters to the Seventy. He would not have them despise the great gifts bestowed on them, which He had just solemnly confirmed, but He would not have them glory in them. They had a higher ground of rejoicing, even that their names were written in heaven, —that they were enrolled among the number of God's elect servants, to whom it is His good pleasure to give the kingdom. A blessed privilege indeed, and one which should make them rejoice, yet rejoice with trembling, lest, called to such high privilege, any of them should through pride fall like 'the angels which kept not their first estate'" (Jude 6).

[2] "Mark the difference between the rejoicing of the servants and that of their Lord. They rejoiced in the wondrous powers they possessed: He in the blessed truths made known to the lowly."—*Canon How.*

"Bless'd eyes, which see the things we see!
And yet this tree of life hath prov'd
To many a soul a poison tree,
Beheld, and not belov'd.

So like an angel's is our bliss
(Oh! thought to comfort and appal)
It needs must bring, if used amiss,
An angel's hopeless fall."
—*Keble.*

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AUGUST 1.

Parable of the Good Samaritan.

LUKE x. 25-37.

"A CERTAIN lawyer stood up, and tempted Him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself (Deut. vi. 5; Lev. xix. 18). And He said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

"Not when we feel, in fervent mood,
'The luxury of doing good,'
But when, excitement's impulse gone,
We still for conscience' sake go on:

This is the neighbour-love of Heaven,
The Love which God to man hath given;
The Love which man to man must give,
If he with God in Heaven would live."—*Monsell.*

"And those who copy thus Christ's life on earth,
Feeding the poor, and comforting the weeper,
Will all receive a meed of priceless worth,
When ripely gathered by the Heavenly Reaper."
—"*Lays of the Pious Minstrels.*"

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AUGUST 2.

Martha and Mary.

LUKE x. 38-42.

"NOW it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her."[1]

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[1] "Martha was troubled about *many* things. Only *one* thing should be the object of real and deep anxiety. And that 'one thing' was the 'good part' Mary had chosen. . . . We may see in these two sisters examples of two very different classes of persons. Martha represents those who serve Christ in busy active labour; Mary those who serve Him in secret adoration and devotion. Each have their place in Christ's Church, and each win their blessing. But Christ Himself declares the latter the more blessed service. The former may be mere outward activity; the latter is closer to Himself. We can do better without labours than without devotion. It has been said that 'To labour is to pray.' Surely it is equally true that to pray is to labour in our Master's service. But we must not think our Lord desires us to draw a contrast between labours and devotion. His rebuke is for those who make light of devotion, and would call others away from it to more active service. The best and truest life is one (like that of Angels) made up of *both* these forms of service—active labours and inward devotion."—*Canon How.*

"It was the spirit, distracted, harassed, and careworn, in which Martha pursued her occupations, which is found fault with: 'Martha, Martha, thou art' (He does not say 'occupied,' but) 'careful and troubled about many things.' The service done to the Divine Prophet was right enough; it was suitable, comely, decorous; but it should have been done with a serene, not with a ruffled spirit."—*Goulburn's "Cathedral System."*

"Never be in a hurry: do everything quietly and in a calm spirit."—*"Spiritual Letters of S. Francis de Sales."*

"For ever would I take my seat
With Mary at the Master's feet;
Be this my happy choice;
My only care, delight, and bliss,
My joy, my heaven on earth, be this,
To hear the Bridegroom's voice."

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AUGUST 3.

"He was Praying."

LUKE xi. 1-13.

"AND it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples. And He said unto them, When ye pray, say, Our[1] Father Which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so in earth. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil. And He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you;[2] seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more[3] shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"

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[1] "The words, which our Lord Jesus Christ hath taught us in His prayer, are the rule and standard of our desires."—*St. Augustine.*

[2] "They whose hearts desire nothing, pray for nothing. . . . We receive grace in the same degree we desire it."—*Bishop Wilson.*

[3] "May the 'how much more' of Jesus Christ find a lodgment in our hearts, so as to be an ever-present help and encouragement to us in prayer. Learn the lesson the words convey well, and weave it into the sentiments of your heart, and you will then draw out easily and delightfully from a Father's Love, all the blessings which it yearns to bestow upon you."—*Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion."*

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Casting out a Devil.

LUKE xi. 14-23.

"AND He was casting out a devil, and it was dumb. And it came to pass, when the devil was gone out, the dumb spake; and the people wondered. But some of them said, He casteth out devils through Beelzebub the chief of the devils. And others, tempting Him, sought of Him a sign from heaven. But He, knowing their thoughts, said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and a house divided against a house falleth. If Satan also be divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand? because ye say that I cast out devils through Beelzebub. And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your sons cast them out? therefore shall they be your judges. But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you. When a strong man armed keepeth his palace, his goods are in peace: but when a stronger than he shall come upon him, and overcome him, he taketh from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and divideth his spoils.[1] He that is not with Me is against Me: and he that gathereth not with Me scattereth."

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[1] . . . "Christ describes Himself as one stronger than the strong man, who has turned him out, and is dividing his spoils. . . . What is 'dividing the spoils'? It is taking what the conquered person had, using it in such a way as the conqueror pleases. . . . Christ then is dividing Satan's spoils, when He so dwells in us, as to use every power of our souls and bodies for good, which Satan had before used for evil; when He takes the tongue which had been accustomed to profane words, and employs it in speaking His truth, in setting forth His praises, in comforting and instructing His little ones; when He turns away the eyes which had been used to behold vanity, and opens them to behold wondrous things out of His Law."

"In these and in other ways Jesus Christ may be truly said to divide the spoils of the wicked one. This then is what we have to ask ourselves: is this kind of work going on in our souls and bodies? . . . Is Satan being stripped of that armour wherein he trusted to get advantage of us? That armour is the very opposite to the armour of God, . . . of which we read so much in different parts of the New Testament. . . . If you cannot truly say, that the evil one is gradually losing strength in his warfare against you, then you have reason to fear his getting the dominion over you again;—you have need to watch against the seven other spirits more wicked than the first, which are ready to enter in and dwell in the heart of the careless, unthinking Christian; you have need to cry mightily unto God that your last state be not worse than the first."—*Keble's "Sermons for the Christian Year."*

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AUGUST 5.

"The Unclean Spirit."

LUKE xi. 24-32.

"WHEN the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest; and finding none, he saith, I will return unto my house whence I came out. And when he cometh, he findeth it swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first.[1] And it came to pass, as He spake these things, a certain woman of the company lifted up her voice, and said unto Him, Blessed is the womb that bare Thee, and the paps which Thou hast sucked. But He said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God, and keep it. And when the people were gathered thick together, He began to say, This is an evil generation: they seek a sign; and there shall no sign be given it, but the sign of Jonas the Prophet. For as Jonas was a sign unto the Ninevites,[2] so shall also the Son of Man be to this generation. The queen of the south shall rise up in the Judgment with the men of this generation, and condemn them: for she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon is here. The men of Nineve shall rise up in the Judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here."

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[1] "The awful peril of falling back into sin once repented of is here fearfully pictured to us by our Lord."—*Canon How.*

"Watch lest the blessings offered thee
Through thine own fault be curst,
And thy last state may haply be
Far worse than was thy first."—*Monsell.*

[2] "As Jonas was a sign."] "Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites by his miraculous deliverance from his three days' living death, which he doubtless related in his preaching to them. So Christ would be a sign to that generation by His miraculous Resurrection from the dead. The Resurrection is continually appealed to by the Apostles as the great proof of Christ's Divine mission."—*Canon How.*

"Once gain the mountain-top, and thou art free:
Till then, who rest, presume; who turn to look, are lost."—*Keble.*

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AUGUST 6.

"The Light of the Body is the Eye."

LUKE xi. 33-36.

"NO man, when he hath lighted a candle, putteth it in a secret place, neither under a bushel, but on a candlestick, that they which come in may see the light. The light of the body is the eye:[1] therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light."

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[1] "These verses are also found in the Sermon on the Mount. There they seem to teach that the whole inner man is lit with heavenly light when the *heart* and *affections* are set on things above. Here they teach that the same inward light is won by a clear *faith* in Christ and His Truth. . . . The eye conveying light to the body is a parable. . . . The eye is the light (literally, the candle) of the body. When the eye is pure and clear, it gives light to the whole body. When it is dull and defiled, it can give no light. Take heed, then, that that eye, which is meant to be your light, be not darkness through its wilful blindness. If it shine so as to fill the body with light, then is all around as bright and clear as a room lit up with a brightly shining lamp or candle. The spiritual meaning is not hard to see: The soul has an eye to give it light, even Faith. If Faith is clear and true, the soul is in light: if Faith is weak and dim, the soul is in darkness. Take care that that very Faith which should flood your soul with light be not itself dark and blind. If it does shed the light of truth upon your soul, filling it with its brightness, then is your soul as full of light as a brightly lighted room."—*Canon How.*

"That our defects should make us vile in the sight of God is not to be wondered at. But that our very virtues should often be nothing more than imperfections may well make us tremble. Our wisdom—how often is it but a carnal and worldly policy! Our modesty—but a regulated and hypocritical exterior, assumed to keep up appearances, and secure a good name! Our zeal—but the impulse of pride or bad temper! Our frankness—but a blunt and heedless manner! How reluctantly and evasively do we offer up our sinful attachments in sacrifice to God! how little is there of the heart in our most specious performances! Let us fear lest the light which is in us be darkness."—*Fénelon.*

"Self-examination is absolutely necessary. Without it you cannot know what is in your heart. And unless you know that, you will have no deep sense of the evil of sin; of the many ways in which it tempts you, and your own readiness to follow it; of your need of a High Priest and Mediator between you and God; of the blessedness of the sacrifice of Christ, and the help of the Holy Spirit."—"*Ways of Overcoming Temptation.*"

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AUGUST 7.

The Pharisees Rebuked.

LUKE xi. 37-44.

"AND as He spake, a certain Pharisee besought Him to dine with him: and He went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that He had not first washed before dinner. And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not He that made that which is without make that which is within also? But rather give alms of such things as ye have; and, behold, all things are clean unto you. But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them."[1]

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[1] "Jesus here found Himself, not among publicans and sinners, where He could soothe, and teach, and bless—not among the poor, to whom He could preach the kingdom of heaven—not among friends and disciples, who listened with deep and loving reverence to His words—but among the cold, hard, threatening faces, the sneers and frowns, of haughty rivals and open enemies. . . . Spies and calumniators from the first, they were now debasing even their pretentious and patronizing hospitality into fresh opportunity for treacherous conspiracy. The time was come for yet plainer language, for yet more unmeasured indignation: and He did not spare them. He exposed in words which were no parables, and could not be mistaken, the extent to which their outward cleanliness was but the thin film which covered their inward wickedness and greed. He denounced their contemptible scrupulosity in the tithing of pot-herbs, their flagrant neglect of essential virtues; the cant, the ambition, the publicity, the ostentation of their outward orthodoxy, the dreadful corruption of their inmost hearts. Hidden graves were they over which men walk, and, without knowing it, become defiled."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Lord, make us to see ourselves as Thou seest us!"

"After frequent examinations how few really know what is lying at the bottom of their hearts! Is it not because we content ourselves with seeking out grave sins, and leaving others unnoticed which, if less grievous, are not less dangerous in their results? . . . We must not content ourselves with a general resolution to abandon our sins, but attack that sin which holds us fastest, and leave nothing undone to free ourselves from its grasp."—*"The Hidden Life."*

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AUGUST 8.

Reproaches.

LUKE xi. 45-52.

"THEN answered one of the lawyers, and said unto Him, Master, thus saying Thou reproachest us also.[1] And He said, Woe unto you also, ye lawyers! for ye lade men with burdens grievous to be borne, and ye yourselves touch not the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchres of the Prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchres. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them Prophets and Apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: that the blood of all the Prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; from the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias, which perished between the altar and the Temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."

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[1] "Yes, He reproached them also; they, too, heaped on the shoulders of others the burdens which themselves refused to bear; they, too, built the sepulchres of the Prophets whom their sins had slain; they, too, set their backs against the door of knowledge, and held the key, so that none could enter in; on them, too, as on all that guilty generation, should come the blood of all the Prophets (*see* 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21). . . . The same discourse, but yet fuller and more terrible, was subsequently uttered by Jesus in the Temple of Jerusalem in the last great week of His life on earth; but thus did He on this occasion, hurl down upon them from the heaven of His moral superiority the first heart-scathing lightnings of His seven-times-uttered woe. They thought, perhaps, that He would have been deceived by their specious smoothness and hypocritical hospitality; but He knew that it was not out of true heart that they offered Him even the barest courtesies of life. . . . The time had come for Him to show to these hypocrites how well He knew the deceitfulness of their hearts, how deeply He hated the wickedness of their lives."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Keep it ever in the heart of Thy servant that it is indeed an evil thing and bitter to offend the Lord."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine indignation, neither chasten me in Thy heavy displeasure."

"I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; O do Thou forgive the wickedness of my sin."—*Bishop Andrewes' "Devotions."*

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AUGUST 9.

Solemn Warnings.

LUKE xii. 1-10.

"WHEN there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trode one upon another, He began to say unto His disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.[1] For there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known. Therefore whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops. And I say unto you My friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear Him, Which after He hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear Him. Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God? But even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore: ye are of more value than many sparrows. Also I say unto you, Whosoever shall confess Me before men, him shall the Son of Man also confess before the Angels of God: but he that denieth Me before men shall be denied before the Angels of God. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost it shall not be forgiven."

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[1] . . . "Addressing primarily His own disciples, but through them the listening thousands, He broke out into a solemn warning. . . . He warned them that there was One before Whose Eye, ten thousand times brighter than the sun, secresy was impossible. He bade them not be afraid of men—a fear to which the sad perturbances of these last few days might well have inclined them—but to fear Him Who could not only destroy the body, but cast the soul also into the Gehenna of fire. The God Who loved them would care for them; and the Son of Man would, before the Angels of God, confess them that confessed Him before men."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"God shall bring every work into *judgment, with every secret thing*, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccles. xii. 14).

"God grant us to be His now, that we may be His for ever. Amen." *—Hon. and Rev. W. H. Lyttellton.*

"Grant us faith to know Thee near,
Hail Thy grace, Thy judgment fear,
And through trial persevere."

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AUGUST 10.

The Rich Fool.

LUKE xii. 11-21.

"AND when they bring you unto the synagogues, and unto magistrates, and powers, take ye no thought how or what thing ye shall answer, or what ye shall say: for the Holy Ghost shall teach you in the same hour what ye ought to say. And one of the company said unto Him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me. And He said unto him, Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you? And He said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And He spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?[1] So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

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[1] "It is not indicated, any more than in the case of Dives, that his riches were unjustly acquired: his fault lay in his forgetting the Giver; forgetting that he was but a steward of them; forgetting that the soul cannot live by them; forgetting how soon death might make him relax his grasp of them."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Death is terrible to those who have made the world their all. How passing strange it is, that the lapse of so many ages has not yet chased delusion from our minds; that we are yet unable to reason from the past to the present and the future! We delight ourselves in life's brief show, till it become, in fancy's eye, substantial and eternal. . . . What will avail us a life of enjoyment, unless it conduct us, by a wise and Christian course, to a tranquil and happy death?"—*Fénelon.*

"We barter life for pottage; sell true bliss
For wealth or power, for pleasure or renown;
Thus, Esau-like, our Father's blessing miss,
Then wash with fruitless tears our faded crown."—*Keble.*

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Trust.

LUKE xii. 22-34.

"HE said unto His disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on. The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment. Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls? And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit? If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest? Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If then God so clothe the grass, which is to-day in the field, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will He clothe you, O ye of little faith? And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you. Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.[1] Sell that ye have,[2] and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

"Plan not, nor scheme—but calmly wait,
His choice is best,
While blind and erring is thy sight,
His wisdom sees and judges right;
So trust and rest.

Desire not! self-love is strong
Within thy breast,
And yet He loves thee better still;
So let Him do His loving will,
And trust and rest."
—*Adelaide A. Proctor.*

[1] . . . "What hope and joy are ours in seeking the kingdom of God, when we know that it is God's 'good pleasure' to give it us! God has called us to be inheritors of that kingdom; He destines us for it, and it for us; He gives us all needful helps in winning it. We have then none but ourselves to blame if we lose it at last."—*Canon How.*

[2] "That is, renounce all the pleasure that wealth affords, rather than defraud the poor and distressed of their right. . . . Let your alms be in secret as much as may be."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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AUGUST 12.

Watching.

LUKE xii. 35-40.

"LET your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the goodman of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not."[1]

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[1] . . . "Shall we go on shutting our eyes to the great things which are before us, and living as if they were merely fables? . . . The best need to bestir themselves every day, and by watching and praying to keep their hearts alive to God and the coming world. But if they too need it, what shall we say of the others? Do not many seem to be quite asleep? as if there were no death, no resurrection, no judgment, no Judge to come down from Heaven, no eternal Heaven, no eternal Hell! as if this world were indeed all; and when men breathed their last breath on the earth, they were indeed *no more*. . . . But if we live in faith, constantly laying our sins before Him, and earnestly seeking His pardon and grace, then—be the end sooner or later, be it to-morrow or a thousand years hence—there is no judgment to be dreaded. God loveth His own who cry day and night unto Him. . . . God will surely give the blessing of Eternal Life to those who continually wipe out the record of judgment by continual repentance, who live in the Spirit, and die in Christ."—"*Brighstone Sermons.*"

"Are you ready for the meeting
With the Saviour in the air?
Longing for that holy greeting
With the ransomed myriads there?
If not ready, if not ready,
Oh! for *that great Day* prepare!"
—"*Lyra Anglicana.*"

"He that lives best, watches most."—*Archdeacon Nicholson.*

"Believer, thou who art standing on thy watchtower, be more faithful than ever at thy post. . . . *Holy living* is the best, the *only*, preparative for *holy dying*."—"*The Words of Jesus.*"

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AUGUST 13.

The Justice of God.

LUKE xii. 42-48.

"AND the Lord said, Who then is that faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath. But and if that servant say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming; and shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken; the lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."[1]

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[1] "God is entirely impartial. Men will be judged according to their opportunities and means of knowing His will. Those who sin, without knowing the commandments of the Law, will not be judged by the commandments of the Law, but by such law as they have. Those who sin, knowing those commandments, will be judged by them. It is not by possessing the Law, or by hearing and knowing it, that men will be justified, but by doing it."—*Bishop Moberly.*

"The knowledge of the will of God brings with it the duty of obedience. What is my knowledge? What are my acts? The servant who knew his lord's will, but did it not, is beaten with many stripes."—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

"Faith is no faith, unless it work in repentance, love, and holy living."—"*Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans,*" *by Bishop Moberly.*

"Justice and judgment are the habitation of Thy throne."—Ps. lxxxix. 14.

"Miserable will he be whom death surpriseth either doing evil, or doing nothing, or doing that which God does not require of him. Can one imagine, that the generality of Christians believe this truth? Suffer me not, O God, to fall into forgetfulness of it."

"May the consideration of a judgment to come oblige me to examine, to try, to judge myself, that I may prevent a severe judgment of God by a true repentance, and lead a life answerable to true repentance, that I may find mercy at the Great Day."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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AUGUST 14.

"The Baptism of Blood."

LUKE xii. 49-59.

"I AM come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? But I have a baptism to be baptized with;[1] and how am I straitened[2] till it be accomplished! Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division: for from henceforth there shall be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father shall be divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. And He said also to the people, When ye see a cloud rise out of the west, straightway ye say, There cometh a shower; and so it is. And when ye see the south wind blow, ye say, There will be heat; and it cometh to pass. Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky and of the earth; but how is it that ye do not discern this time? Yea, and why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right? When thou goest with thine adversary to the magistrate, as thou art in the way, give diligence that thou mayest be delivered from him; lest he hale thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and the officer cast thee into prison. I tell thee, thou shalt not depart thence, till thou hast paid the very last mite."

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[1] "This 'baptism' is the baptism of Blood,—the Cross and Passion to which our Lord was now drawing nigh."

[2] "How am I straitened."] "That is, 'How am I troubled and oppressed in spirit.' As the time drew nigh, when He would pass beneath the deep waters of affliction, He was 'straitened' by those, to us unknown, mental agonies, which would seem to have reached their head in the garden of Gethsemane. The bands of our sins pinioned, as it were, His loving arms, and the burden of our iniquities weighed down His soaring spirit."—*Prescott.*

"Thus He longed for the time to come. Perhaps His human nature longed for the shortening of the time of awful waiting."—*Canon How.*

"Thy life was given for me,
Thy Blood, O Lord, was shed,
That I might ransomed be,
And quickened from the dead;
Thy life was given for me;
What have I given for Thee?"

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AUGUST 15.

The Need of Repentance.

LUKE xiii. 1-9.

"THERE were present at that season some that told Him of the Galilæans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilæans were sinners above all the Galilæans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.[1] Or those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. He spake also this parable; A certain man had a fig-tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: and if it bear fruit,[2] well: and if not,[3] then after that thou shalt cut it down."

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[1] "In these words we are exactly taught how rightly to use the calamities which befall others; what their significance is as regards ourselves; that they are loud calls to an earnest repentance—for, instead of exalting ourselves above and against the sufferers, as though we were more righteous than they, and on this account exempt from like tribulations, we are on the contrary to recognize that whatever befalls another might justly have befallen ourselves. . . . When we have learned to see in ourselves the bitter root of sin, we shall learn to acknowledge that whatever deadly fruit it bears in another, it might have borne the same or worse, under like circumstances, in ourselves. But when this is felt, it will be no longer possible to triumph over the doom of any sinner. The thoughts of a man, thus taught to know himself, will fall back on his own life and on his own heart. He will see in the chastisement which has overtaken another the image of the chastisement which might justly have overtaken himself; he will see in it a message of warning addressed to himself."

[2] "If it bear fruit."] "Thus the door of repentance is left open to all; the freewill of man is recognized and respected, and sinners are warned that they are not shut up, except indeed by their own evil will, in unbelief and hardness of heart; that it is they only themselves who make inevitable their doom."—*Trench "On the Parables."*

[3] "If not," etc.] "The pleading is only for a longer trial. . . . There is a limit to the prayers of the Intercessor, and to the long-suffering of God."—*Canon How.*

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AUGUST 16.

The Cure on the Sabbath.

LUKE xiii. 10-17.

"AND He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And, behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And He laid His hands on her: and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. And the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because that Jesus had healed on the Sabbath Day, and said unto the people, There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed, and not on the Sabbath Day. The Lord then answered him, and said, Thou hypocrite,[1] doth not each one of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath Day? And when He had said these things, all His adversaries were ashamed: and all the people rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by Him."

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[1] "'Hypocrite,' the Lord calls him, zeal for God being but the cloak which he wore to hide, whether from others only, or, in a sadder hypocrisy, from his own heart also, his hatred of all that was holy and divine. He was not, in fact, disturbed because the Sabbath was violated, but because Christ was glorified. Therefore, he drew down upon himself that sharp rebuke from Him, Whose sharpest rebuke was uttered only in love, and Who now would, if possible, have torn from off this man's heart the veil which was hiding his true self even from his own eyes."—*Trench "On the Miracles."*

"Envy is the rust of a cankered soul, a foul, meagre vice, that turns the happiness and welfare of others into our misery and torment. Thus Cain first enviously repined at the success and acceptation of his brother's sacrifice, and this quickly prompted him to murder. . . . Beware of prejudice against thy brother; for prejudice is a very ill interpreter of actions, and will be sure to expound them in the worst sense."—*Bishop Hopkins.*

"This miracle may fitly suggest a spiritual application,—namely, the lifting up by the power of Christ to new life and heavenly desires of those whose eyes and hearts have been long bowed down to earth by worldliness, or covetousness, or fleshly lusts."—*Canon How.*

"From envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness, Good Lord, deliver us."

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AUGUST 17.

"The Kingdom of God."

LUKE xiii. 18-30.

"THEN said He, Unto what is the kingdom of God like? and whereunto shall I resemble it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and cast into his garden; and it grew, and waxed a great tree; and the fowls of the air lodged in the branches of it. And again He said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. And He went through the cities and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. Then said one unto Him, Lord, are there few that be saved? And He said unto them, Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able.[1] When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are: then shall ye begin to say, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets. But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not whence ye are; depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets, in the kingdom of God, and you yourselves thrust out. And they shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God. And, behold, there are last which shall be first, and there are first which shall be last."[2]

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[1] . . . "Waste not the precious opportunities of life in idle wonderment, but *strive*. Through that narrow gate, none—not were they a thousand times of the seed of Abraham—can enter without earnest effort. . . . Since the day will come when the door shall be shut, and it shall be for ever too late to enter there—since no impassioned appeal shall then admit, no claim of olden knowledge shall then be recognized . . . since some of those who in their spiritual pride thought that they best knew the Lord, shall hear the awful repudiation, 'I know you not'—*strive ye* to be of those that enter in. For many *shall* enter from every quarter of the globe, and yet thou, O son of Abraham, mayest be excluded."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"The true philosophy of the Gospel system is this, to feel as if much depended on ourselves; but at the same time entertaining the loftier conviction that *all* depends upon God. Jesus, when He invites to the strait gate, does not inculcate remaining outside, in a state of passive and listless inaction. . . . His exhortation rather is, 'Strive'—'knock'—'*agonize* to enter in!' We are not to ascend to heaven, seated, like Elijah, in a chariot of fire, without toil or effort, but rather to '*fight* the good fight of faith.'"—"*Memories of Bethany.*"

[2] "Let us press forward, lest we be hindmost in the course."—*Fénelon.*

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AUGUST 18.

The Message to Herod.

LUKE xiii. 31-35.

"THE same day there came certain of the Pharisees, saying unto Him, Get Thee out, and depart hence: for Herod will kill Thee. And He said unto them, Go ye,[1] and tell that fox, Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected. Nevertheless I must walk to-day, and to-morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee; how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen[2] doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate: and verily I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me, until the time come when ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord."

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[1] "Go ye."] . . . "Tell that crafty and wicked prince, that I am employed in the business for which I was sent by God into the world; and that, when I have finished this business, and the time appointed by Divine Wisdom is come, I shall indeed at last be perfected by suffering death. But that in the meantime, till the season (determined by God Himself only) shall come, I must continue preaching and working miracles; the power of Herod cannot hinder Me, neither can I suffer at any other time, or in any other place, than that which the wisdom of God has from the beginning appointed."—*Dr. S. Clarke.*

[2] "As a hen."] "No figure could more touchingly picture to us our Lord's tender yearning for the people who despised and rejected Him. It is the same for each one of us even now. And yet how many are there, 'whom He would fain cherish under His fostering wings, and preserve from the assaults of their great spiritual enemy,' over whom He has to repeat His bitter lamentation, because they will not! 'How often would I' are His sorrowful words. Shall it be always in vain?"—*Canon How.*

"Lord, in this Thy mercy's day,
Ere it pass for aye away,
On our knees we fall and pray.

By Thy tears of bitter woe
For Jerusalem below,
Let us not Thy love forego.

Grant us 'neath Thy wings a place,
Lest we lose this day of grace
Ere we shall behold Thy Face. Amen."

"O blessed Jesus, help me to watch and pray; let me be always ready; keep me in Thy love, and preserve me by Thy power, till my change shall come."—*Bogatzky.*

"Arm Thou my soul with strength, and at last according to Thy promise, crown it with victory."—*Bishop Hall.*

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AUGUST 19.

Healing on the Sabbath.

LUKE xiv. 1-6.

"AND it came to pass, as He went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath Day, that they watched Him. And, behold, there was a certain man before Him which had the dropsy. And Jesus answering spake unto the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath Day? And they held their peace. And He took him, and healed him, and let him go; and answered them, saying, Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not straightway pull him out on the Sabbath Day? And they could not answer Him again to these things."[1]

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[1] "Every word of Christ's answer is significant. He does not defend His breaking of the Sabbath, but declares that He has not broken it at all: You have your relaxations of the Sabbath's strictness, required by the very nature and necessities of your earthly condition: you make no difficulty in the matter where there is danger that loss would ensue, that your possessions would be perilled by the leaving some act undone. Your ox or your ass are precious in your sight, and you count it no violation of the day to lead them away. . . . Yet is not a human soul more precious still?"—*Trench "On the Miracles."*

"Besides justifying His practice of doing good on the Sabbath Day, and healing the man afflicted with a dropsy, our Lord designed also, in His visit to this Pharisee, to provide an antidote against pride, that dropsy of the soul, which thirsts ever the more painfully the more freely it is indulged. And His rule is, that in lowliness of mind we esteem others better than ourselves" (*see* Phil. ii. 3).—*Girdlestone.*

"Give me grace, O Lord, to be clothed with humility, and in lowliness of mind to esteem others better than myself. Pour into my heart, O Lord, that charity which envieth not, that I may rejoice with them that do rejoice, and account my brother's gain to be my own. Grant me grace to put away from me all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking, with all malice, and to be kind to all men, tender-hearted, forgiving others even as Thou, O Lord, for Christ's sake, hast promised to forgive me. Amen."—*Goulburn's "Short Devotional Forms."*

"'It is lawful,' so He proved by several miracles, 'to do good on the Sabbath Day;' and if lawful, surely most blessed."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

"O well for man, to whom is given
One day from meaner thoughts reprieved!
O ill for man, if all the seven
For earthly needs he toiled and grieved!"

—*C. L. Ford.*

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Feasts and Guests.

LUKE xiv. 7-14.

"HE put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when He marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.[1] Then said He also to him that bade Him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."[2]

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[1] "Pride, exclusiveness, self-glorification, have no place in the kingdom of God. Humility is the only passport which can obtain for us an entrance there."

"Humble we must be, if to Heaven we go;
High is the roof there, but the gate is low."

[2] "Luxury, ostentation, the hope of a return, are not true principles of hospitality. A richer recompense awaits the kindness bestowed upon the poor than the adulatory entertainment of the friendly and the rich. In receiving friends and relatives, do not forget the helpless and the afflicted."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Give to the poor
Ye give to God; He is with us in the Poor."—*Tennyson.*

"O God, Who hast taught us that we are all but Thy stewards, keep me, I beseech Thee, from that great injustice of defrauding Thy poor of their right; give me grace to moderate all my vain desires and expenses, that I may have to give to them that need, and that the measure of Thy blessings to me may be the measure of my charity to others."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again." (Prov. xix. 17.)

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AUGUST 21.

Excuses.

LUKE xiv. 15-24.

"WHEN one of them that sat at meat with Him heard these things, he said unto Him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Then said He unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper-time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper."[1]

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[1] "Are *we* not bidden by our Lord Himself to come to His Table, . . . to eat that sacred bread of which He said, 'Take, eat: this is My Body?' . . . Are we not told that except we eat the Flesh of the Son of Man and drink His Blood, that we have no life in us; but that if we eat His Flesh and drink His Blood, He dwelleth in us and we in Him?" . . . Yet, "do all flock to Communion? . . . Alas! is it not rather true of the great majority that they all with one consent begin to make excuse? Anything seems to serve as an excuse. *They are not good enough*,—but if they desire to be better, is not this the very way to get better? *They do not feel ready to do so great a thing:* but are they ready to die? Death may come upon them at any moment: are they ready to take the chance, and risk being called away to the presence of God unprepared? . . . Then again, some think *they are safe without*. They flatter themselves that they are converted, that they have the Spirit of God, that they have faith, and look upon these *ordinances*, as they are apt reproachfully to call them, as if they were opposed to spiritual religion. . . . But what a terrible presumption this is! when Christ Himself instituted the Sacrament of the Communion, with almost His last words bade His disciples do this—continue to do it—in remembrance of Him, and said such great and wonderful things about its worth and efficacy!"—*Moberly's "Brighstone Sermons."*

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AUGUST 22.

Counting the Cost.

Luke xiv. 25-35.

"THERE went great multitudes with Him: and He turned, and said unto them, If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.[1] And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what king, going to make war against another king, sitteth not down first, and consulteth whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an ambassage, and desireth conditions of peace. So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple. Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be seasoned? It is neither fit for the land, nor yet for the dunghill; but men cast it out. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."[2]

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[1] "He warned them that all who would be His disciples must come to Him, not expecting earthly love or acceptance, but expecting alienation and opposition, and *counting the cost*. They must abandon, if need be, every earthly tie; they must sit absolutely loose to the interests of the world. They must take up the cross and follow Him; strange language, of which it was only afterwards that they learnt the full significance. For a man to begin a tower which he could not finish—for a king to enter on a war in which nothing was possible save disaster and defeat—involved disgrace and indicated folly: better not to follow Him at all, unless they followed Him prepared to forsake all that they had on earth; prepared to sacrifice the interests of time, and to live solely for those of eternity."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

[2] "A solemn appeal for thoughtful attention to words of deep importance."—*Canon How.*

"Study first to develop and train your highest faculties. Your spiritual nature, since that is confessedly highest, since that alone is capable of an eternal life, demands your first care. Give your first and best attention to that. Sacrifice whatever would prevent you from cultivating it, for such loss is gain indeed. . . . 'He that hath ears to hear,' then 'let him hear,' and, that he may hear, let him remember that his very capacity for hearing binds him to use and cultivate it."—"*The Expositor.*"

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AUGUST 23.

Lost and Found.

LUKE xv. 3-10.

"AND He spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?[1] And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing.[2] And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it?[3] And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the Angels of God over one sinner that repenteth."

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[1] "The 'Good Shepherd' spares Himself no labour or suffering in recovering the lost sheep. Nay, He 'giveth His life for the sheep.' Has He done so much to find us, and shall we refuse to be found by Him?"

[2] "He layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing."] "There is no smiting of the wanderer, no harshness, no anger; only the tenderest love. Who can fail to remember the prophet's wondrously beautiful picture of the Good Shepherd" (*see* Isa. xl. 11).—*Canon How.*

> "Perverse and foolish, oft I strayed,
> But yet in love He sought me,
> And on His Shoulder gently laid,
> And home, rejoicing, brought me."

[3] "The lost sinner is compared to a lost coin, and we may reflect on the fitness of this comparison. For each human soul bears on it (however marred and defaced) the image and superscription of the Creator. Though lost, it still belongs to Him."—*Canon How.*

> "Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
> The distant scene; one step enough for me.
>
> I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
> Shouldst lead me on;
> I loved to choose and see my path; but now
> Lead Thou me on."—*Dr. Newman.*

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The Prodigal Son.

LUKE xv. 11-32.

"AND He said, A certain man had two sons: and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living. And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want. And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants. And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: for this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry. Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father hath killed the fatted calf, because he hath received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: but as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf. And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."[1]

[1] . . . "Every line, every touch of the picture is full of beautiful, eternal significance."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

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AUGUST 25.

The Unjust Steward.

LUKE xvi. 1-13.

"AND He said also unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? give an account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he said, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.[1] And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations. He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

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[1] "The good may learn wisdom and forethought from the bad. Nay, the bad shame the good by their greater wisdom and zeal in their own affairs. The bad are wiser in worldly things than the good in heavenly."—*Canon How.*

"The children of light are not at half the pains to win heaven which the men of this world are to win earth; the world is better served by its servants than God is by His."—*Archbishop Trench.*

"Jesus told them the parable of the 'Unjust Steward' to show them the necessity of care and faithfulness, of prudence and wisdom, in so managing the affairs and interests and possessions of this life as not to lose hereafter their heritage of the eternal riches."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Give me, I beseech Thee, O God, the eyes of faith, that I may see the world what in truth it is; the danger of its riches, the folly of its pleasures, the multitude of its snares, the power of its temptations, its deadly poison, and certain danger of drawing my heart from the love of Thee."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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AUGUST 26.

The Heart-searching God.

LUKE xvi. 14-18.

"AND the Pharisees also, who were covetous, heard all these things: and they derided Him. And He said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts:[1] for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God. The Law and the Prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, than one tittle of the Law to fail. Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery."[2]

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[1] "God, Who knew the hearts of these Pharisees, saw their covetousness, as well as other sins; and, much as men might esteem them, seeing only the outside, in God's sight they were hateful."—*Canon How.*

"Let us not be too easily satisfied! And oh! how very easily we are wont to be satisfied! How very easily we assure ourselves that all is right with us, and the love of Christ, and the favour of the Father! But is it so? . . . I would rather hear you say that you *fear*, than that you feel sure. I would rather hear you confess to many sins and much unworthiness, than presume upon the certain favour of God, and the undoubted working of the Holy Ghost in your heart. . . . Believe me, if your life does not show the fruits of the Spirit, you are deceiving yourself in your confidence."—*Moberly's "Brighstone Sermons."*

[2] "Why our Lord selects this one portion of God's Law to enforce at this particular time we cannot tell. Probably something in the conversation of the by-standers may have suggested it. We must observe how completely unqualified the rule is, as here given."—*Canon How.*

"O my Saviour, Who pleasedst not Thyself, but tookest upon Thee the form of a servant, let me not profess to follow Thee, without endeavouring to follow the blessed steps of Thy most holy life, Thy patience, meekness, and humility; Thy great disregard of the world, its pleasures, profits, and all its idols; Thy sensible concern for the miseries of men, Thy unweariedness in doing good, Thy constancy in prayer and resignation to the will of Thy Father. Let me part with anything, as dear as a right hand or right eye, rather than not follow Thee. O Lord, obtain for me the spirit of mortification and self-denial, that I may follow Thee, as I hope to live with Thee for ever."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Men judge by things outward; God judges and rewards according to things inward."—*Bishop Moberly.*

"Look upon me, gracious Lord, with an eye of mercy."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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AUGUST 27.

The Rich Man and Lazarus.

LUKE xvi. 19-31.

"THERE[1] was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: and there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;[2] and in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented.[3] And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: for I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

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[1] This parable conveys "a most serious warning to the rich against any selfish use of their riches, whether it be by a refined self-indulgence or a covetous hoarding."

[2] "Was buried."] "No doubt with all pomp and magnificence, as became a rich man. The poor man's burial is not mentioned. That was an event of no note. What if the mourners at that great funeral could have had their eyes opened to see what was taking place in the world of spirits!"—*Canon How.*

[3] "The decision of the next world will often reverse the estimation wherein men are held in this: . . . God is no respecter of persons; the heart must make its choice between the 'good things' of this life and those which the externals of this life do not affect. . . . The means of grace which God's mercy accords to every living soul are ample for its enlightenment and deliverance; if these be neglected, no miracle will be wrought to startle the absorbed soul from its worldly interests. 'If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead.'"—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

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AUGUST 28.

Offences, Forgiveness, and Faith.

LUKE xvii. 1-10.

"THEN said He unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences[1] will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come! It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent;[2] thou shalt forgive him. And the Apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed,[3] ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you. But which of you, having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? and will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants:[4] we have done that which was our duty to do."

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[1] "Offences."] . . . "To tempt others, especially the young or weak, to sin, is verily to do the devil's own work."

[2] . . . "The expression of sorrow ought to satisfy us. However often a brother humbles himself to say he is sorry, and to ask pardon, we must be ready to forgive. Is not this the way we hope God will deal with us?"

[3] . . . "The seed has life in itself, and the power of growth, and the germ of a great tree. And so true faith, even if small and weak at first, will grow and increase till it can do mighty works. Thus our Lord answers the prayer, 'Increase our faith,' by words which would set forth to the Apostles the manner of its increase. It must grow like the seed. Yet He will foster and nourish it." —*Canon How.*

[4] "No man can boast of what he does, or ever think of bringing it to account, who considers what he does not do."—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

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AUGUST 29.

The Ten Lepers.

LUKE xvii. 12-19.

"AND as He entered into a certain village, there met Him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off: and they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. And when He saw them, He said unto them, Go show yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. And He said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole."[1]

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[1] "There was something in that living death of leprosy . . . which always seems to have thrilled the Lord's heart with a keen and instantaneous compassion. And never more so than at this moment. Scarcely had He heard their piteous cry, . . . than instantly, without sufficient pause even to approach them more nearly, He called aloud to them, 'Go show yourselves unto the priests.' They knew the significance of that command—that it bade them hurry off to claim from the priest the recognition of their cure, the certificate of their restitution to every rite and privilege of human life. . . . 'And as they went they were cleansed.' One would have thought that they would have suffered no obstacle to hinder the passionate gratitude which should have prompted them to hasten back at once . . . to thank Jesus for a gift of something more precious than life itself. . . . We only know that of ten who were healed but *one* returned, and he was a Samaritan. . . . The heart of Jesus, familiar as He was with all ingratitude, was yet moved by an instance of it so flagrant, and so all but unanimous. . . . 'Were there not ten cleansed?' He asked in sorrowful surprise; 'but where are the nine?'"—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Be thankful for what thou receivest, and thou wilt be deemed worthy to receive more."—*Thomas à Kempis.*

"Oh! for more of a spirit of thankfulness, through continually recollecting our privilege as the sons of God, and God's purpose in all He does with us to prepare us for His glory!"—*Rev. A. W. Thorold.*

"One only out of ten turned back to give glory to God. May His Almighty grace keep us from this great sin of unthankfulness."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

"When thou hast thanked thy God for every blessing sent,
What time will then remain for murmurs or lament?"

—*Archbishop Trench.*

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AUGUST 30.

The Coming of the Lord.

LUKE xvii. 20-37.

"AND when He was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, He answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you. And He said unto the disciples, The days will come, when ye shall desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and ye shall not see it. And they shall say to you, See here; or, see there: go not after them, nor follow them. For as the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven; so shall also the Son of Man be in His day. But first must He suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation. And as it was in the days of Noe, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and the flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back. Remember Lot's wife. Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two men in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto Him, Where, Lord? And He said unto them, Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."

. . . "Judgment is going on *now*, every day and every hour our hearts lie open before God, and as we obey or disobey, as we pray or refrain from praying, as we utter bad words or good ones, as we let our thoughts run to sin, or check them and turn them towards God and Heaven, the judgment gathers round us. If we are living carelessly, and thinking little about God and Christ, the shadows of judgment are deepening around us. If we die so, not repenting of our sins, nor turning to God in faith, the final judgment will only pronounce what will have settled itself before, what is indeed settling itself every day, settling itself for good or evil every day that we live."—*Moberly's "Brighstone Sermons."*

"The kingdom of God is Faith reigning and ruling within us."—*Fénelon.*

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AUGUST 31.

The Unjust Judge.

LUKE xviii. 1-8.

"AND He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: and there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge His own elect which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.[1] Nevertheless when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?"[2]

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[1] "God will not leave His people 'a moment longer in the fire of affliction than is needful, delivering them from it the instant that patience has had its perfect work.' 'The relief, which to man's impatience seems to tarry long, indeed arrives speedily; it could not, according to the farseeing and loving counsels of God, have arrived a moment earlier.'"—*Archbishop Trench, quoted by Canon How.*

[2] "Were He to come now, would Faith be found in us? Where is our Faith? Where are its signs? Do we believe that this life is but a brief passage to a better? Is it our conviction that before we can reign with Christ we must be partakers of His sufferings? Do we look back upon the world as a vain show, and on death as the avenue to the true and incorruptible inheritance? Do we live by Faith? Is it our living and animating principle? Have we a genuine relish for the eternal truths which it holds forth? Are we as diligent in applying it to the nutriment of our souls, as in nourishing the body with suitable aliment? Do we habituate ourselves to try all things by the test of Faith? Is it the rule and correction of our judgment? Alas! far from living by Faith, we extinguish it in our mind, and in our heart. In thought, in word, in act, we indulge the very spirit of Heathenism. He who believed with a true belief, would he live our life? Let us therefore fear lest the kingdom of God be taken from us and given to others who shall bring forth the fruits thereof. . . . Make us, O Lord, of Thine elect, since none can belong to Thee, without conformity of life to Thy teaching and Thy will."—*Fénelon.*

"Holy Saviour, Friend unseen,
Help me through life's varying scene
By faith to cling to Thee!"

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Pride and Humility.

LUKE xviii. 9-17.

"HE spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the Temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.[1] And they brought unto Him also infants, that He would touch them: but when His disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such[2] is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein."

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[1] "A proud Christian is a contradiction in terms; humility is the very essence of the Gospel."—*Bishop Mant.*

"True humility, arising from our knowledge of our sins, and sorrow for them, and of God's perfect holiness and perpetual nearness to us, shall be rewarded with a cheerful sense of pardon, and a real spiritual exaltation."—*Bishop Moberly.*

[2] "Of such."] "Our Lord says not 'of *these*'—but 'of *such*.' He would not lose the occasion of setting before His Apostles the lesson that a childlike spirit is needed for those who would enter His kingdom. Surely the denier of Infant Baptism would change our Lord's lesson, and instead of His saying, 'Ye must become like these little ones to be fit for My kingdom,' would rather hear Him say, 'These little ones must become like you to be fit for My kingdom.' An infant can do nothing to win grace. It can only *receive*. This must be the spirit of those who would be fit for Christ's kingdom."

. . . "Not only do our Lord's words prove that infants *may* be brought into His kingdom and receive its blessings, but they also show that this should be the *rule* of His kingdom, and that Adult Baptism is the exception to the rule."—*Canon How.*

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SEPTEMBER 2.

The Rich Young Ruler.

LUKE xviii. 18-27.

"A CERTAIN ruler asked Him, saying, Good Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? none is good, save one, that is, God. Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother. And he said, All these have I kept from my youth up. Now when Jesus heard these things, He said unto him, Yet lackest thou one thing: sell all that thou hast, and distribute unto the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, follow Me.[1] And when he heard this, he was very sorrowful: for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he was very sorrowful, He said, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God![2] For it is easier for a camel to go through a needle's eye, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they that heard it said, Who then can be saved? And He said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."

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[1] "Christ has said to each of us at our Baptism, and in our Confirmation,—is saying still by His warnings, His ministers, and the inspiration of His Spirit (although in a sense different from that in which He addressed the words to certain persons in the days of His earthly pilgrimage), 'Follow Me.' Morning by morning He says to us, as we wake up refreshed, and a new day, full of hope and promise, dawns upon us by His long-suffering mercy, 'Follow Me.' The task thus imposed is of quite sufficient magnitude and difficulty to absorb all our faculties. It cannot possibly be done as a by-work, . . . it must be our main business."—*Goulburn's "Pursuit of Holiness."*

[2] "If we understand by 'enter into the kingdom of God,' 'cast in their lot with Christ's people here below,' how true is this saying!"—*Canon How.*

"The eagerness to be rich is one of the special sins of our age and country. It is the origin of reckless speculation and of unfair trading, and more than any other single vice tends to the rendering the conscience dull and the heart hard."—*Canon Woodford.*

"If you ask me where I would seek for the clearest and most marked sign of decreasing faith in the world, I reply, not in the writings of professed infidels, not in the surmises of scornful sceptics, but in the slavish love of money which is demoralizing men."—"*Parish Magazine.*"

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SEPTEMBER 3.

Fulfilment of Prophecy.

LUKE xviii. 28-34.

"THEN Peter said, Lo, we have left all, and followed Thee. And He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or parents, or brethren, or wife, or children, for the kingdom of God's sake,[1] who shall not receive manifold more in this present time,[2] and in the world to come life everlasting. Then He took unto Him the twelve, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the Prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished.[3] For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things:[4] and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken."

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[1] "We must not confine this promise of our Saviour's to His own immediate followers and disciples; it extends to all His faithful servants, in every age and nation of the world, who part with anything which is dear and valuable to them for the sake of the Gospel."—*Bishop Porteous.*

[2] "Manifold more."] "From the joys of a good conscience, the comforts of the Holy Spirit, the sense of God's favour, the affections of other pious Christians, and the hope of everlasting treasures in heaven."—*Dr. Whitby.*

"All must bear the cross. Through tribulation is the entrance into Heaven. They who are at ease must expect in due time to be called in their turn to suffer. They who suffer now may look forward to the glory reserved for those who are made like unto Christ."—*Rev. G. Currey, D.D.*

[3] "I taught the Prophets from the beginning, saith the Lord, and cease not, even to this day, to speak to all; but many are hardened, and deaf to My voice."

"What I have promised I will give; what I have said, I will fulfil; if only any man remain faithful in My love even to the end."

"He that hath My words and despiseth them, hath One that shall judge Him at the last day."—"*The Imitation of Christ.*"

[4] "*They* could not comprehend His words about the Cross, before it was really lifted up; but, what is yet more remarkable, neither do we Christians, most of us, comprehend them. . . . It is not only that the *doctrine* of the Cross is too deep for us—that we do not lay to heart our own sinfulness, and our Lord's Atonement. . . . We do not, as is sometimes said, *realise* the Passion of our Lord."—*Keble's* "*Sermons.*"

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SEPTEMBER 4.

"Jesus of Nazareth" and "Blind Bartimæus."

LUKE xviii. 35-43.

"AND it came to pass, that as He was come nigh unto Jericho, a certain blind man sat by the wayside begging: and hearing the multitude pass by, he asked what it meant. And they told him, that Jesus of Nazareth passeth by. And he cried, saying, Jesus, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And they which went before rebuked him, that he should hold his peace: but he cried so much the more, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood, and commanded him to be brought unto Him: and when he was come near, He asked him, saying, What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? And he said, Lord, that I may receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Receive thy sight: thy faith hath saved thee. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God: and all the people, when they saw it, gave praise unto God."[1]

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[1] "Lord! we sit and cry to Thee,
Like the blind beside the way:
Make our darken'd souls to see
The glory of Thy perfect day!
Lord, rebuke our sullen night,
And give Thyself unto our sight!"—*Milman.*

"It is a great sin not to arise and to throw open our windows, for this spiritual light is ready to shine unto all men who will open to receive it."—*Wycliffe.*

"'Arise and shine,' O Lord, 'tis Thy command:
Impart Thy strength; stretch forth Thy helping hand.
Thou, Saviour, giv'st the light; that light, when given,
Maintain, O Lord, and fit my soul for heaven."—*Anon.*

"Lord Jesus, Thou Light of Truth and Sun of Righteousness, shed Thy bright beams upon my heart, that I may know, and knowing, love Thee. Help me, My strength, by Whom I am sustained; shine upon me, my light, by Whom alone I see: and quicken me, my life, by Whom alone I live. For Thou only art my help and my light, my life and my joy, my Lord and my God!"—*St. Augustine.*

"Trust thou in His mercy; His goodness can save
From the terrors of death, and redeem from the grave;
He shall lighten thy pathways when dark they appear,
And remove thee to Heaven, and thy home shall be there."
—"*Lays of the Pious Minstrels.*"

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SEPTEMBER 5.

Zacchæus the Publican.

LUKE xix. 1-10.

"JESUS entered and passed through Jericho. And, behold, there was a man named Zacchæus, which was the chief among the publicans, and he was rich.[1] And he sought to see Jesus Who He was; and could not for the press, because he was little of stature. And he ran before, and climbed up into a sycomore tree to see Him: for He was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up, and saw him, and said unto him, Zacchæus, make haste, and come down; for to-day I must abide at thy house.[2] And he made haste, and came down, and received Him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That He was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner. And Zacchæus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.[3] And Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

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[1] "He was rich."] "Doubtless from the profits—partly, perhaps, the unjust profits—of his calling. The calling and conversion of Zacchæus are a practical comment on our Lord's words concerning the difficulty of a rich man entering into the kingdom of God. 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.'"

[2] "Jesus invites Himself to visit those who dare not for their unworthiness invite Him."

[3] "It is not likely that Zacchæus would stand up and utter this saying without something having been said by our Lord to call it forth, and so it is well remarked that, 'We are left by St. Luke to judge of our Lord's sermon at the table of Zacchæus by its effects'" (*Wordsworth*).

"Zacchæus is not here describing what had been, and was, his usual practice, else his words would be more of a Pharisaic boast, than of a penitent confession. He is making a solemn vow and resolution for the time to come. It is as though he said, 'I hereby dedicate half my goods to the poor, and promise to restore fourfold in every case where I have taken wrongfully from any man.' . . . Observe how the newly awakened faith of Zacchæus at once showed itself in works, and how the sincerity of his repentance was proved by his bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. Observe also how his first act is to strike a deadly blow at his besetting sin."—*Canon How.*

"If Thou, O God, givest me ability, give me an heart to be both just and charitable: that Thou mayest say unto me, as Thou didst unto this publican, 'Salvation is come to thy house.'"—*Bishop Wilson.*

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Parable of the Pounds.

LUKE xix. 11-27.

"HE added and spake a parable, because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear. He said therefore, A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return. And he called his ten servants, and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, Occupy till I come. But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. And it came to pass, that when he was returned, having received the kingdom, then he commanded these servants to be called unto him, to whom he had given the money, that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds. And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. And the second came, saying, Lord, thy pound hath gained five pounds. And he said likewise to him, Be thou also over five cities. And another came, saying, Lord, behold, here is thy pound, which I have kept laid up in a napkin: for I feared thee, because thou art an austere man: thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow. And he saith unto him, Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee, thou wicked servant. Thou knewest that I was an austere man, taking up that I laid not down, and reaping that I did not sow: wherefore then gavest not thou my money into the bank, that at my coming I might have required mine own with usury? And he said unto them that stood by, Take from him the pound, and give it to him that hath ten pounds. (And they said unto him, Lord, he hath ten pounds.) For I say unto you, That unto every one which hath shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that he hath shall be taken away from him. But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me."[1]

[1] "May God eradicate out of the hearts of all of us that worldly, false, and mischievous notion,—that we may neglect the opportunities offorded us, waste our time, and leave our talents uncultivated, and yet be accounted in the sight of God to have lived upon the whole a pure life. This would be very well, if we were to be judged at the Last Day by the World,—by the society in which we have moved. The world *does* account harmlessness for goodness. . . . But we are to be judged by One, Who has not the smallest regard to the verdict of society, or the estimate of man. We are to stand before the tribunal of the Lord Jesus Christ. . . . He proclaims the principle of His dealing with us to be this—that wherever He has bestowed a talent, He expects a revenue from it—He expects that we shall put it out to interest, and bring this interest into His treasury."—*Goulburn's "Idle Word."*

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SEPTEMBER 7.

Entering Jerusalem.

LUKE xix. 29-40.

"WHEN He was come nigh to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount called the Mount of Olives, He sent two of His disciples, saying, Go ye into the village over against you; in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt tied, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him hither. And if any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him. And they that were sent went their way, and found even as He had said unto them. And as they were loosing the colt, the owners thereof said unto them, Why loose ye the colt? And they said, The Lord hath need of him. And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon. And as He went, they spread their clothes in the way. And when He was come nigh, even now at the descent of the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen; saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the Name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest. And some of the Pharisees from among the multitude said unto Him, Master, rebuke Thy disciples. And He answered and said unto them, I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."[1]

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[1] "May not Olivet be regarded on this occasion as a type of the Church triumphant in Heaven—Jesus enthroned in the affections of a mighty multitude which no man can number—old and young, great and small, rich and poor, casting their palms of victory at His feet, and ascribing to Him all the glory of their great salvation? Let us ask, Have *we* received Jesus as *our* King?—have *our* palm branches been cast at His feet? Feeling that He is alike willing and mighty to save, have we joined in the rapture of praise—'Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord?' Have our hearts become living temples thrown open for His reception? . . . 'The despised and rejected' is, for once, the honoured and exalted. It is a glimpse of the crown before He ascends the cross. . . . Alas! it *was* but a glimpse. What a picture of the fickleness and treachery of the heart! That excited populace who are now shouting their hosannahs, are ere long to be raising the cry, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!' Four days hence we shall find the palm branches lying withered on the Bethany road, and the blazing torches of an assassin-band nigh the very spot where He is now passing with an applauding retinue!"—"*Memories of Bethany.*"

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SEPTEMBER 8.

"He beheld the City, and wept over it."

LUKE xix. 41-46.

"WHEN He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.[1] For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee,[2] and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.[3] And He went into the Temple, and began to cast out them that sold therein, and them that bought; saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of Prayer (Isa. lvi. 7): but ye have made it a den of thieves."[4]

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[1] "And doth the Saviour weep
Over His people's sin,
Because we will not let Him keep
The souls He died to win?
Ye hearts, that love the Lord,
If at this sight ye burn,
See that in thought, in deed, in word,
Ye hate what made Him mourn!"—*Keble.*

[2] "This is an exact prediction of that which actually occurred in the siege of Jerusalem. It has been well pointed out, that whereas in the weeping Jesus shows Himself to be truly Man, in the prophecy He shows Himself to be truly God."

[3] "The day when God had visited His people with the offers of grace and salvation. 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not' (John i. 11). Let us not read this touching passage, and think only of Jerusalem. There is the spiritual Jerusalem, Christ's own Church and people. Has He no need to utter a like lament over that? There are our own hearts. Do *we* know the things which belong unto our peace? Do *we* know the time of our visitation? God grant the day come not when it may be said of us, 'But now they are hid from thine eyes!'"—*Canon How.*

[4] "Attend upon the Lord without distraction" (1 Cor. vii. 35).

"O Holy Spirit of grace, help my infirmities, that I may fix my thoughts upon my duty; and that I may serve Thee with all my heart and mind. That I may never give way to wandering thoughts, but watch against them continually. Make me serious and thoughtful at all times, that I may not fail being so when I attend upon God."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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SEPTEMBER 9.

Teaching in the Temple.

LUKE XX. 1-8.

"IT came to pass, that on one of those days, as He taught the people in the Temple, and preached the Gospel,[1] the chief priests and the Scribes came upon Him with the elders, and spake unto Him, saying, Tell us, by what authority doest Thou these things? or Who is He that gave Thee this authority? And He answered and said unto them, I will also ask you one thing; and answer Me: The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; He will say, Why then believed ye him not? But and if we say, Of men; all the people will stone us: for they be persuaded that John was a prophet. And they answered, that they could not tell whence it was. And Jesus said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things."[2]

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[1] "Preached the Gospel."] "This expression need not be limited to the preaching of the central doctrine of the Atonement. All our Lord's gracious invitations, all His merciful warnings, all His holy teachings, are '*the Gospel*,' but only so because leading men to Him, in Whom they may find life and salvation."—*Canon How.*

"There are who never yet have heard
The tidings of Thy blessèd Word,
But still in heathen darkness dwell,
Without one thought of heaven or hell;

And some within Thy sacred Fold
To holy things are dead and cold,
And waste the precious hours of life
In selfish ease, or toil, or strife;

And many a quickened soul within
There lurks the secret love of sin;
A wayward will, or anxious fears,
Or lingering taint of bygone years.

O give repentance true and deep
To all Thy lost and wandering sheep,
And kindle in their hearts the fire
Of holy love and pure desire.

That so from Angel-hosts above
May rise a sweeter song of love,
And we, with all the Blest, adore
Thy Name, O God, for evermore."

[2] "He that will find truth, must seek it with a free judgment and a sanctified mind. He that thus seeks shall find; he shall live in truth, and that shall live in him."—*J. Smith.*

"Men, young and old, know more than they once did about the doctrines of the Gospel; but familiarity with its hopes is a very different thing from obedience to its rules."—*Vaughan's "Harrow Sermons."*

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The Vineyard.

LUKE xx. 9-19.

"THEN began He to speak to the people this parable; A certain man planted a vineyard,[1] and let it forth to husbandmen, and went into a far country for a long time. And at the season he sent a servant to the husbandmen, that they should give him of the fruit of the vineyard: but the husbandmen beat him, and sent him away empty. And again he sent another servant: and they beat him also, and entreated him shamefully, and sent him away empty. And again he sent a third: and they wounded him also, and cast him out. Then said the lord of the vineyard, What shall I do? I will send my beloved son: it may be they will reverence him when they see him. But when the husbandmen saw him, they reasoned among themselves, saying, This is the heir: come, let us kill him, that the inheritance may be ours. So they cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What therefore shall the lord of the vineyard do unto them? He shall come and destroy these husbandmen, and shall give the vineyard to others. And when they heard it, they said, God forbid. And He beheld them, and said, What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? (Ps. cxviii. 22.) Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder. And the chief priests and the Scribes the same hour sought to lay hands on Him; and they feared the people: for they perceived that He had spoken this parable against them."

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[1] "The owner of the vineyard here is God; the husbandmen are the Jews, His chosen and peculiar people; the servants were the holy Prophets, who were sent to warn them to give the fruits of a holy and good life. But, instead of their reforming by their admonitions, they put them to death. Thus they did likewise to the Son of God Himself. The Jews then being no longer worthy of the Divine grace, which they had thus abused, the vineyard was given to others; that is, the Gospel was preached to other nations, whereby we and all mankind have been called out of darkness into His marvellous light. Let us then take care to walk as children of light, in all holiness and virtue; for, in proportion to the means of grace will be our account at the last day."—*Bishop Mann.*

"As it is our greatest honour that the Name of Christ is called upon us, so let it be our care that our profession be not formal, barren, and empty, like the Jewish fig-tree, abounding with leaves, void of fruit; but real, active, fruitful of all good works, and exemplary in an universal obedience to the whole will of God."—*Bishop Hall.*

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SEPTEMBER 11.

The Question of the Spies.

LUKE xx. 20-26.

"AND they watched Him, and sent forth spies, which should feign themselves just men, that they might take hold of His words, that so they might deliver Him unto the power and authority of the governor. And they asked Him, saying, Master, we know that Thou sayest and teachest rightly, neither acceptest Thou the person of any, but teachest the way of God truly: Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar, or no? But He perceived their craftiness, and said unto them, Why tempt ye Me? Show Me a penny. Whose image and superscription hath it?[1] They answered and said, Cæsar's. And He said unto them, Render[2] therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's. And they could not take hold of His words before the people: and they marvelled at His answer, and held their peace."

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[1] "We are God's coinage. We belong to Him. Yet the corruption of our nature has wellnigh effaced His 'image and superscription' in us. But God would restore to us that which we have lost. One great object of the mystery of Christ's holy Incarnation is that man, by becoming like Christ, may become like God; for Christ is the '*image* of the invisible God' (Col. i. 15). To this end God has engraven upon us His 'superscription' anew, in that we were signed and marked as His in our Baptism. That 'superscription' now stands out sharp and clear, whether we choose to read and acknowledge it or no. It is, 'In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' But the 'image' is not at the same time stamped out anew. That is the work of sanctifying grace. God's *character* (which word properly signifies the stamp on a coin) ought to come out continually with more and more clearness in each baptized Christian. Yet how many are daily deepening and sharpening in themselves the character, not of God, but of Satan. Observe, the stamp on the coin shows to whom it belongs. And the day is coming when each coin will be rendered to him whose mark is on it." —*Canon How.*

[2] "Render, then, to all their due. To man, for God's sake. To God, for His own."—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

"Thy time, thy talents, health, and wealth
Were all by Heaven bestowed,
To be made useful here for man,
Then reckoned for with God."—*Monsell.*

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SEPTEMBER 12.

The Life to come.

LUKE xx. 27-38.

"THEN came to Him certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked Him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? for seven had her to wife. And Jesus answering said unto them, The children of this world marry, and are given in marriage: but they which shall be accounted worthy[1] to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more: for they are equal unto the Angels;[2] and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he calleth the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob (Exod. iii. 6, 16). For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him."

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[1] "Accounted worthy."] "We find continual mention of worthiness in Scripture, which, while it does not ignore the grace of God (in the right use and employment of which, indeed, it really consists), recognizes and stimulates the personal responsibility of man. *See* Rom. ii. 6, 7; 1 Cor. iii. 8, 14; and especially Rev. iii. 4, 'They shall walk with Me in white, for they are worthy.'"—*Rev. A. W. Thorold.*

[2] "This is not spoken of power, or glory, or dignity, but of their state of existence and of their immortality. 'It doth not yet appear what we shall be' (1 John iii. 2), but, as we know that we shall be like Christ in 'that world,' so we also know that in some ways we shall also be 'equal unto the Angels.' But if we would be 'accounted worthy to obtain that world,' then must we here in this world strive to copy Christ's example, and to do God's will as the Angels do in heaven."—*Canon How.*

"Ah! strive no more to know what fate
Is pre-ordained for thee;
'Tis vain in this thy mortal state,
For Heaven's inscrutable decree
Will only be revealed in vast eternity.
Then, O my soul,
Remember thy celestial birth,
And live to Heaven while here on earth."- *E. Thomas.*

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SEPTEMBER 13.

Christ's Question and Warning.

LUKE xx. 41-47.

"AND He saith unto them, How say they that Christ is David's Son? And David himself saith in the Book of Psalms, The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool (Ps. cx. 1). David therefore calleth Him Lord, how is He then His Son?[1] Then in the audience of all the people He said unto His disciples, Beware of the Scribes, which desire to walk in long robes, and love greetings in the markets, and the highest seats in the synagogues, and the chief rooms at feasts; which devour widows' houses, and for a show make long prayers: the same shall receive greater damnation."[2]

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[1] "David was one of those holy men that spake as he was moved by the Holy Ghost, especially in calling Christ Lord; for it was then, as it is still (1 Cor. xii. 3), that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Now to prove that David in spirit called Christ Lord, He quotes Ps. cx. 1, which Psalm the Scribes themselves understood of Christ. Of Him it is certain the Prophet there speaks—of Him, and of no other man; and it is a prophetical summary of the doctrine of Christ; it describes Him executing the offices of a prophet, priest, and king, both in His state of humiliation and exaltation."—*Rev. Matthew Henry.*

[2] "Greater damnation."] "Greater for their high professions. Of two men, whose hearts are equally far from God, that one will receive the severest sentence who has added to his other sin the hateful sin of hypocrisy. Better an open sinner than a pretended saint."—*Canon How.*

"It is the devil's masterpiece to make us think well of ourselves. . . . It is dreadful, but perhaps, not uncommon self-deceit, to present ourselves before God with a lie in our mouths and hypocrisy in the heart, or a secret unwillingness to be or to do as we pray."—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

"Grant, O God, that what we have said with our lips and heard with our ears we may believe in our hearts and show forth in our lives, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."—*Anon.*

"A delight in censure and detraction, in reading, hearing, speaking, or thinking ill of others, is a very grievous and subtle snare, by which Satan too often beguiles imperfect penitents. They seem to themselves zealous against something wrong, while they are indeed giving way to pride and dislike. Watch your heart therefore in this: if you have reason to fear such an evil habit forming within you, fear greatly lest it prove a sign of the devil's returning, and set yourself at once to mortify it with all your might."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

"From all the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil, Good Lord, deliver us."

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SEPTEMBER 14.

Treasury Gifts.

LUKE xxi. 1-4.

"AND He looked up, and saw the rich men casting their gifts into the treasury. And He saw also a certain poor widow casting in thither two mites. And He said, Of a truth I say unto you, that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God: but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had."[1]

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[1] "Her whole gift was of the value of less than a farthing; and with the shame of poverty, she may well have shrunk from giving so trivial a gift when the rich men around her were lavishing their gold. But Jesus was pleased with the faithfulness and the self-sacrificing spirit of the gift. It was like the 'cup of cold water' given for love's sake, which in His kingdom should not go unrewarded. He wished to teach for ever the great lesson that the essence of charity is self-denial: and the self-denial of this widow in her pauper condition was far greater than that of the wealthiest Pharisee who had contributed his gold. . . . 'One coin out of a little,' says St. Ambrose, 'is better than a treasure out of much; for it is not considered how much is given, but how much remains behind."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Lord! in all I offer Thee
Let this rule my guidance be,
It must cost me loss or pain,
Else Thou wilt not deem it gain.

'Tis not meet that first my wealth,
Time and talents, heart and health,
Should be all on self bestow'd,
Thence to overflow to God.

Rather be my gifts supplied
Out of luxuries denied:
Out of pleasures I *might* take,
But refuse for Jesus' sake.

The intrinsic worth of gold
Lies not in what men behold,
Its more valuable part
Is its trial of the heart.

Though the rich may, lavish, pour
Wealth from their abounding store,
Time there was when in God's sight
Dearer proved the widow's mite.

God alone the value knows
Of what from abundance flows,
And, though He the gift may use,
We the giver's grace may lose."

—*Monsell.*

"The best check against niggardliness in our alms—the truest comfort for the widow who can only give her farthing—is to remember that Jesus sees what we cast in."—"*Parish Magazine.*"

"Covetousness, vanity, and ambition have nothing, while charity has always much, to bestow. Moderate then your desires, and you will find something to spare."—"*The Hidden Life.*"

"God requires our alms as He did the sacrifices of old, as testimonies or fruits of the inward graces of our minds."—*Bonnell.*

"Give *gladly* for thy Saviour's sake."

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Prophecies.

LUKE xxi. 5-15.

"AND as some spake of the Temple, how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts, He said, As for these things which ye behold, the days will come, in the which there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.[1] And they asked Him, saying, Master, but when shall these things be? and what sign will there be when these things shall come to pass? And He said, Take heed that ye be not deceived: for many shall come in My Name, saying, I am Christ; and the time draweth near: go ye not therefore after them. But when ye shall hear of wars and commotions, be not terrified: for these things must first come to pass; but the end is not by and by. Then said He unto them, Nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great signs shall there be from heaven. But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for My Name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom,[2] which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist."

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[1] "This prophecy was most literally fulfilled, for, in the siege of Jerusalem, although the Roman emperor Titus had given commands to save the Temple, yet the soldiers set fire to it, and, when its beauty was thus destroyed, it was ordered to be entirely pulled down, as was done."

[2] "'A mouth' means a power of speaking—eloquence. To 'gainsay' is to contradict—to speak against; *see* Acts vi. 10, where this promise is fulfilled."—*Canon How.*

"Are not all painful labours to be endured for the sake of life eternal? It is no small matter to lose or to gain the Kingdom of God."—"*The Imitation of Christ.*"

"Heavenly Tutor! of Thy kindness
Teach my darkness, guide my blindness;
That my steps Thy paths may tread,
Which to endless glory lead."—*F. Denison.*

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SEPTEMBER 16.

"Days of Vengeance."

Luke xxi. 16-28.

"AND ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for My Name's sake. But there shall not an hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls.[1] And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judæa flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days! for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled. And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.[2] And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."[3]

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[1] "Unto His chosen, as unto them that love Him, He causeth all things to work for the best. So that with Him, by the heavenly light of steadfast faith, they see light even in death. With Him, even in heaviness and sorrow, they fail not of joy and comfort; with Him, even in poverty, affliction and trouble, they neither perish nor are forsaken."—*Coverdale.*

[2] "This is one point in which our Lord shall 'so come in like manner' as He went up" (Acts i. 11).

[3] "Redemption."] "This word is used here of the end and completion of the work. The price of our redemption was paid on the Cross, so that we are already redeemed—'bought with a price.' God the Son 'hath redeemed me and all mankind' (*Church Catechism*). But the full effect and final triumph of this redemption will be when Christ comes again to take His redeemed people to their eternal home."—*Canon How.*

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Words of Warning.

LUKE xxi. 29-36.

"AND He spake to them a parable; Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away, till all be fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away. And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares. For as a snare[1] shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth. Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man."[2]

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[1] "As a snare."] "Which falls in a moment on the unsuspecting animal. So suddenly shall *the day* fall upon the careless, who will not watch."—*Canon How.*

[2] "O Lord, may I be watchful, and ready for Thy Second Coming;—watching always unto prayer; that when Thou comest in the clouds of heaven with all Thy holy Angels to judge the quick and the dead, I may be found acceptable in Thy sight. O Thou Who, to save my soul, endurest the Cross, despising the shame, and art set down at the right hand of the Father, teach me now so to fear Thy Judgment, that I may have a sure hope of Thy mercy in the awful day of my account before Thee, when the great Assize shall be set, and the Book opened, and I be judged according to the things written therein. O Thou most Merciful, show me ever Thy mercy, and grant me Thy salvation. Amen."
—"*Holy Thoughts and Prayers.*"

"And since in God's recording book
Our sins are written every one,—
The crime, the wrath, the wandering look,
The good we knew, and left undone:—
Lord, ere the last dread trumpet sound,
And ere before Thy Face we stand,
Look Thou on each accusing word,
And blot it with Thy bleeding Hand."
—"*Lyra Anglicana.*"

"Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Rev. xxii. 12).

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The Paschal Supper.

LUKE xxii. 8-18.

"AND He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover, that we may eat. And they said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare? And He said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in. And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the Passover with My disciples? And he shall show you a large upper room furnished: there make ready. And they went, and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover. And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the twelve Apostles with Him. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer:[1] for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof,[2] until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And He took the cup,[3] and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come."

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[1] "This was His great farewell feast of love, the last calm and blessed intercourse with His disciples before the hurried, and to them terrible, events of His capture, condemnation, and death. Besides it was a Passover of vast importance to the Christian Church, for it was now that the old type was to be closed, and the new Christian feast to be instituted. It was just a year before this that the disciples had been startled, and some offended, by the wonderful discourse concerning eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood, spoken at Capernaum (John vi.). He was now about to clear up part of the mystery of those words. Thus it was an occasion of great blessing to the disciples, and therefore Jesus had eagerly longed for it."

[2] "Our Lord declares that this is the last Passover He will eat on earth, and thus passes away the type which was fulfilled in Him. This is the last true Passover feast. . . . If Jesus could so earnestly desire the earthly foretaste, with what intensity of desire should we desire the heavenly fulfilment! The one was dark with the awful shadows of the approaching Cross: the other will be bright with the cloudless glory of the Divine radiance."

[3] "This must be carefully distinguished from the similar act which our Lord performed in the Institution of the Lord's Supper shortly afterwards. This cup was one of the paschal cups, tasted by all from time to time during the feast."—*Canon How.*

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The Lord's Supper.

LUKE xxii. 19-22.

"AND He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is My Body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of Me. Likewise also the cup after supper: saying, This cup is the new testament in My Blood, which is shed for you.[1] But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth Me is with Me on the table.[2] And truly the Son of Man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom He is betrayed!"

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[1] "Lord, I believe that the bread that we break, and the cup that we drink, are not bare signs only, but the real communication of Thy Body and Thy Blood, and pledges to assure me of it; and I verily believe, that if with due preparation I come to Thy Table, as certainly as I receive the outward signs, so certainly shall I receive the thing signified;—even Thy most blessed Body and Blood; to receive which inestimable blessing, O merciful Lord, do Thou fit and prepare me. Amen. Amen."—*Bishop Ken.*

"The Holy Communion is not a means of making up for a careless life, but of helping to a holy one. It is the chief means in Christ's kingdom upon earth by which His people are strengthened beforehand against coming temptations. So that we may say, 'My flesh and my heart faileth, but God *is the strength of my heart*, and my portion for ever."—"*Ways of Overcoming Temptation.*"

"Old people . . . how many of them there are who never come to Holy Communion! Middle-aged people, who are thoughtful about other things, and know how often sickness comes on suddenly, and in a few days carries the strongest to the grave,—yet how many of these there are who never come to Holy Communion! Young people—taught and confirmed, who have perhaps in some instances come once or twice after their Confirmation, how often do they fall off again, and become strangers to the Holy Communion to which they have been admitted!" . . .

. . . "Oh, be in earnest! Be in earnest, while you are yet spared, to draw near to God in the special way which God has appointed. Do not let the months and years slip by as they have slipped by before, but bravely, faithfully, wisely, repent you of your sins, be in perfect charity with all men, determine to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in His holy ways,—and in this mind draw near in faith to the Altar of God, and partake of His Holy Communion, to the great comfort and strengthening and sanctification of your souls."—*Moberly's "Brighstone Sermons."*

[2] "If Judas had quenched the first thought of covetousness which awoke in his breast, his hand would never have been the hand of the traitor who sat with Christ at His table, and then went forth to betray Him. The full crime was the completion of the sin, which in its beginning was but a feeling."—"*Passing Thoughts on Religion.*"

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SEPTEMBER 20.

Ambition.

LUKE xxii. 24-30.

"THERE was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. And He said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so:[1] but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.[2] For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth. Ye are they which have continued with Me in My temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel."[3]

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[1] "No, for Christianity reverses the world's judgments. Greatness is littleness; humility is true nobility. . . . How mercifully our Lord rebukes the thought of earthly rivalry and greatness by the promise of heavenly glory and bliss. How can *they* contend for the first place here who are to be princes in the kingdom of glory hereafter; and this too when they have often been told that the path to that glory lies through humiliation?"—*Canon How.*

[2] . . . "Being ambitious about worldly things is in fact submitting yourselves to the devil, and desiring the high places in his kingdom; whereas humility and disregard of worldly things is the way to be subject to God, and well-pleasing to Him. Choose this therefore, and be encouraged by the certain hope of success. For if ye thus submit to God, and draw near to Him, you will be resisting the devil, who can make no defence against those who really resist him. So he will flee away from you, and God will draw near to you in all grace and blessing as ye draw near to Him" (James iv. 7).—*Bishop Moberly.*

"Christian ambition is shown in doing earnestly, though with a quiet mind, the work of that calling in which God has called you. In making the very most of those abilities, be they small or great, with which God has endowed you. In aiming at success in that calling; at high attainments in that study or that profession in which your earthly work lies; with a view to the good of others and to the glory of God."—*Vaughan's "Harrow Sundays."*

[3] "He that overcometh, and keepeth My works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations" (Rev. ii. 26).

"Do not wish that you were not what you are, but rather wish to be perfect as you are;—occupy your thoughts in attaining such perfection, and strive to carry every cross, be it great or small, that is sent you patiently."—"*Spiritual Letters of S. Francis de Sales.*"

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SEPTEMBER 21.

"The Sifting of Temptation."

LUKE xxii. 31-38.

"AND the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not:[1] and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. And he said unto Him, Lord, I am ready to go with Thee, both into prison, and to death.[2] And He said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest Me. And He said unto them, When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing. Then said He unto them, But now, he that hath a purse, let him take it, and likewise his scrip: and he that hath no sword, let him sell his garment, and buy one.[3] For I say unto you, that this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me, And He was reckoned among the transgressors (Isa. liii. 12): for the things concerning Me have an end. And they said, Lord, behold, here are two swords. And He said unto them, It is enough."

---

[1] "That is, 'fail not utterly and finally.' Observe, the Divine Mediator did not pray that St. Peter might not be tempted, but only that he might not be overwhelmed by the temptation. The sifting of temptation is very needful both for humility and for watchfulness. . . . The faith that is near going out His prayers and His grace will yet fan up into a bright flame again. But mark the warning. Even an Apostle's faith *may* fail. Yes; and even *his*, whose noble confession received so high a blessing" (Matt. xvi. 17).

[2] "Over-confidence in self was St. Peter's besetting fault. Yet this is a fault often found in noble, generous natures. How much more loveable is this impulsive zeal than a cold, calculating spirit, which will dare nothing for Christ."

[3] "Christ is preparing His disciples for a very different state of things from that which they had hitherto experienced. They are no longer to expect miraculous protection or a miraculous supply of their needs. They must face the world and its persecutions, and make all due provision for meeting danger and difficulty."—*Canon How.*

Lord Jesus, pray for *me*, that *my* faith fail not!

"Look up to the throne of the Most High God, and behold seated thereon a Great High Priest; nay, a mighty 'Prince, having power with God, and prevailing'—'prayer without ceasing' ascending from His lips in behalf of His people. When Satan seeks 'to sift' them on earth, His upholding power protects them in heaven."—"*The Night Watches.*"

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SEPTEMBER 22.

The Agony.

LUKE xxii. 39-46.

"AND He came out, and went, as He was wont, to the Mount of Olives; and His disciples also followed Him. And when He was at the place, He said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And He was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from Me: nevertheless not My will, but Thine, be done.[1] And there appeared an Angel unto Him from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and His sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when He rose up from prayer, and was come to His disciples, He found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

---

[1] "We are permitted to pray for the removal of our calamities with earnestness and with fervour; we may implore the Almighty that the bitter cup of affliction may pass away from us; but the conclusion must always be the same which His was: 'Not as I will; but as Thou wilt.'"—*Bishop Porteous.*

"To the still wrestlings of the lonely heart
He doth impart
The virtue of His midnight agony,
When none was nigh,
Save God and one good Angel, to assuage
The tempest's rage.

Mortal! if life smile on thee, and thou find
All to thy mind,
Think, Who did once from Heaven to Hell descend
Thee to befriend:
So shalt thou dare forego, at His dear call,
Thy best, thine all.

'O Father! not My will, but Thine be done'—
So spake the Son.
Be this our charm, mellowing Earth's ruder noise
Of griefs and joys:
That we may cling for ever to Thy breast
In perfect rest!"—*Keble.*

[2] "Our Lord's words to His disciples give us the only true guidance for our conduct under trial. 'Rise and pray,' etc., be active, watchful, earnest—only trust not in yourselves. . . . Duties fulfilled, though with an aching heart—prayers uttered, though with faltering lips—these will soothe us. . . . With trial temptation is inseparably joined."

"'Rise and pray' may safely be our motto in all trial."—"*Passing Thoughts on Religion.*"

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Healing in the Hour of Betrayal.

LUKE xxii. 47-53.

"WHILE He yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?[1] When they which were about Him saw what would follow, they said unto Him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword? And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear. And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far.[2] And He touched his ear, and healed him. Then Jesus said unto the chief priests, and captains of the Temple, and the elders, which were come to Him, Be ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the Temple, ye stretched forth no hands against Me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness."

---

[1] "Once more He expostulates with him: even in the commission of the sin that Voice of warning spake. Does it not so speak to me often and often, yet I hear not! Help, Lord, that I do so no more."—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

"Blessed are the ears that gladly receive the pulses of the Divine whisper, and give no heed to the many whisperings of the world."

"Have a good conscience, and thou shalt ever have joy. . . . An evil conscience is always fearful and unquiet."—"*The Imitation of Christ.*"

[2] "Suffer ye thus far."] "These words are to be accepted as still addressed to the disciples: 'Hold now; thus far have ye gone in resistance, but let it be no further; no more of this.' . . . Having thus checked the too forward zeal of His disciples, and now carrying out into act His own precept, 'Love your enemies . . . do good to them that hate you,' . . . He touched the ear of the wounded man and healed him."—*Archbishop Trench.*

"O blessed Lord, give me grace that, according to Thy precept and practice, I may love mine enemies, pray for them, and do good to them who do evil to me; and be merciful to me."—*Litany of Bishop Andrewes.*

. . . "A man is very apt to think and talk much of his *rights*, and to profess that he is bound to stand up for his *rights*, and not to suffer them to be trampled upon. But let the Christian ask, What is his *right*? Is it not to show mercy, and love, and forbearance, and forgiveness? Let him stand up for *this right*, and he will do well."—*Canon How.*

"Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Matt. xi. 29).

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SEPTEMBER 24.

Jesus before the Council.

LUKE xxii. 66-71.

"AS soon as it was day, the elders of the people and the chief priests and the scribes came together, and led Him into their council,[1] saying, Art Thou the Christ? tell us. And He said unto them, If I tell you, ye will not believe: and if I also ask you, ye will not answer Me, nor let Me go. Hereafter shall the Son of Man sit on the right hand of the power of God. Then said they all, Art Thou then the Son of God? And He said unto them, Ye say that I am. And they said, What need we any further witness? for we ourselves have heard of His own mouth."

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[1] "What! Jesus before a tribunal, and a tribunal composed of ungodly men and an impious and prejudiced judge! What! is the Sovereign Judge of the living and the dead led before His own creatures, to be questioned, judged, and condemned to death as a sinner? He, before Whose tribunal all men, yea, all the most powerful monarchs of the earth, must appear as criminals, to hear from His Mouth the irrevocable decree of life or death! How horrible an injustice! how tremendous an outrage! . . . Behold that council of cruel enemies, conspiring the ruin of Him Who came to give His Soul and His Blood to save them, sitting, and looking upon Him with contempt, as a false prophet, as a deceiver; and with hatred and indignation, as a dangerous enemy, Whose merits had effaced theirs, and Who had unveiled their hypocrisy, and condemned their pride and secret licentiousness by the holiness of His own life, and by the purity of His manners; this it was that made Jesus so extremely hateful to them. His preaching, His zeal, His holiness, His glorious miracles, His charity, and the praises of the people; such were the true causes of all the ill-usage they resolved to heap upon Him, of the bitter agonies He was about to endure, of the infamous death to which they were going to condemn Him."—*Avrillon.*

"O gracious Redeemer, Who, in the night of Thy Passion, wouldst be mocked, derided, and many ways despitefully handled; Help mine infirmities, lend me aid that I faint not under temptations or tribulations, but give me grace to be thankful to Thee for them: and be merciful to me. Amen."—*Litany of Bishop Andrewes.*

"From darkness here, and dreariness,
We ask not full repose,
Only be Thou at hand, to bless
Our trial hour of woes.
Is not the pilgrim's toil o'erpaid
By the clear rill and palmy shade?
And see we not, up Earth's dark glade,
The gate of Heaven unclose?"—*Keble.*

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SEPTEMBER 25.

Jesus before Pilate and Herod.

LUKE xxiii. 1-3 and 8, 9.

"AND the whole multitude of them arose, and led Him unto Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, We found this Fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar,[1] saying that He Himself is Christ a King. And Pilate asked Him, saying, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And He answered him and said, Thou sayest it. . . . And when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceeding glad: for he was desirous to see Him of a long season,[2] because he had heard many things of Him; and he hoped to have seen some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned with Him in many words; but He answered him nothing."[3]

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[1] . . . "Our Lord had taught exactly the opposite to this (*see* Matt. xxii. 21). The Jews knew, however, that such an accusation would have more weight with the Roman Governor than any charge of blasphemy against a God in whom he did not believe."—*Canon How.*

[2] "Were these the joy and desire of a pious man longing for true knowledge of Jesus? No; but of mere curiosity. If I find little or no profit from reading or meditation, may it not be that I seek mere knowledge, not the stirring up of holy affections?"—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

[3] "'He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth' (Isa. liii. 7). Even so, in his little measure, does that Christian hero who bears patiently and in silence, for Christ's sake, the reproach which he has not merited. . . . He is following the example of One Who Himself, in the very crisis of His earthly fate, exhibited in its fullest glory the dignity and the majesty of silence."—*Vaughan's "Harrow Sundays."*

"It is an instance of humility silently to bear the calumnies which are raised against us when they relate to ourselves only; but it is a duty of prudence and charity modestly to vindicate ourselves when the honour of God and the Church is concerned. Both Jesus Christ and John the Baptist were slandered: who then will complain that they cannot satisfy the world and stop men's mouths?"—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Still Thou openest not Thy mouth, Thou that art innocent, to teach me to suffer persecutions silently, I who am most guilty."—*Avrillon.*

"O blessed Jesus, as Thou didst bear witness to the Truth before Pilate's judgment seat, grant that I may in like manner give myself up with an entire confidence to Thee amidst every outward difficulty. Amen."—*Benson's "Benedictus Dominus."*

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On the Way to Calvary.

LUKE xxiii. 26-31.

"AND as they led Him away, they laid hold upon one Simon, a Cyrenian, coming out of the country, and on him they laid the cross, that he might bear it after Jesus. And there followed Him a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him. But Jesus turning unto them said, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children. For, behold, the days are coming, in the which they shall say, Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck. Then shall they begin to say to the mountains, Fall on us;[1] and to the hills, Cover us (Hosea x. 8). For if they do these things in a green tree,[2] what shall be done in the dry?"

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[1] "This prophetical description of extreme terror and anguish is applied by our Lord here firstly to the horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem, yet doubtless even here it is meant to carry on the thoughts to the infinitely more awful day of His own Personal coming to judgment, to which the words are specially applied in the Book of Revelation (vi. 16)."

[2] "These words are plainly of the nature of a proverb. Probably the saying was in common use. By the 'green tree' our Lord means Himself, so unfit to suffer; by the 'dry' the Jews, barren and fruitless, and fit only for the axe and the fire. 'If the green and fruit-bearing tree is thus treated, what will become of the dry and dead tree?' 'If judgment begin with the holy and innocent, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?'"—*Canon How.*

"The solemn warning, the last sermon of Christ on earth, was meant primarily for those who heard it; but, like all the words of Christ, it has a deeper and wider meaning for all mankind. Those words warn every child of man that the day of careless pleasure and blasphemous disbelief will be followed by the crack of doom; they warn each human being who lives in pleasure on the earth, and eats, and drinks, and is drunken, that though the patience of God waits, and His silence is unbroken, yet the days shall come when He shall speak in thunder, and His wrath shall burn like fire."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"God's 'Spirit will not always strive!' All His other attributes are infinite, but His patience and forbearance have their 'bounds and limits.' The invitation which is thine to-day may be withdrawn to-morrow. The axe may be even now laid at the root of the tree, and the sentence on the wing, 'Cut it down.'"—"*The Night Watches.*"

"God's wrath is heavier to bear than Christ's Cross."

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Intercession and Pardon.

LUKE xxiii. 32-34 and 39-46.

"THERE were also two other, malefactors, led with Him to be put to death. And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left. Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them;[1] for they know not what they do. . . . And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on Him, saying, If Thou be Christ, save Thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this Man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.[2] And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To-day[3] shalt thou be with Me in Paradise. And it was about the sixth hour, and there was a darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. And the sun was darkened, and the veil of the Temple was rent in the midst. And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Thy hands I commend My Spirit: and having said thus, He gave up the ghost."

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[1] "Such is the revenge which Jesus came to teach unto men!"

[2] "'O wonderful faith of the penitent thief! He saw Jesus condemned, and he addresses Him as a King; he sees Him on the Cross, and he prays to Him as if He were seated in heaven.' Some saw Jesus raise the dead, and yet believed not; *he* saw Jesus dying, and believed. He saw to outward eye One dying as a malefactor like himself; he by faith believed that He would come in His kingdom to reign for ever."

[3] "To-day."] "The penitent thief received more than he asked. He asked to be remembered when Christ came in His kingdom. He received the promise of a blessedness that very day." . . . "It has been well and often observed, that we have the case of this penitent finding mercy in the hour of death, that *none should despair;* but we have *only* this one case, that *none should presume.*" —*Canon How.*

"'Jesu, do Thou my soul receive;
Jesu, do Thou my foes forgive!'
He who would learn that prayer, must live
Under the holy Cross."—*Keble.*

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SEPTEMBER 28.

The First Easter Morning.

LUKE xxiv. 13-27.

"TWO of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know Him. And He said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk, and are sad? And the one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering said unto Him, Art Thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And He said unto them, What things? And they said unto Him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, Which was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people: and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and have crucified Him. But we trusted that it had been He Which should have redeemed Israel: and beside all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not His Body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of Angels, which said that He was alive. And certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but Him they saw not. Then He said unto them, O fools,[1] and slow of heart to believe all that the Prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory? And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

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[1] "How startling must this address have been. The mysterious Stranger at once assumes a new character, and becomes the Teacher, rebuking with authority, and astounding with His wisdom. Long ago they should have learnt how the prophets spoke of Christ, for had He not Himself commanded them to learn this? 'Search the Scriptures; for . . . they are they which testify of Me' (John v. 39). Now that all was fulfilled, that testimony was clearer and mightier still; and to that testimony of the written word, Christ, the living Word, now in His mercy takes them."—*Canon How.*

"Jesus lives! henceforth is death
But the gate of life immortal!"

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SEPTEMBER 29.

The First Easter Evening.

LUKE xxiv. 36-43.

"AND as they thus spake, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And He said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet,[1] that it is I Myself: handle Me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see Me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet. And while they yet believed not[2] for joy, and wondered, He said unto them, Have ye here any meat?[3] And they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And He took it, and did eat before them."

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[1] "St. John says that 'He showed unto them His hands and His side.' Thus we see that He vouchsafed to show them the five sacred wounds of His Crucifixion. Well may we think of the prophet's words when we contemplate this wonderful scene: 'One shall say unto Him, What are these wounds in Thine hands? Then He shall answer, Those with which I was wounded in the house of My friends'" (Zech. xiii. 6).

[2] "This 'believed not' is spoken of no obstinate or sinful unbelief; and the cause of it—'for joy'—gives the secret of all the doubting and hesitation of this great day. The news of the Resurrection, coming first by one and then by another, was too blessed to be believed."

[3] "Our Lord's asking for, and partaking of, food was not to satisfy any want of His, but to give yet further proof of the reality of His bodily existence." —*Canon How.*

"O glorious Lord, Who after three days, having overcome and triumphed over Death and Satan, didst rise again out of the grave, and visit Thy disciples and friends; revive me from the death of sin, cause me to walk in newness of life, and to seek after heavenly things, that when Thou comest again I may appear with Thee in glory; and be merciful to me. Amen."—*Litany of Bishop Andrewes.*

"O joyful sound! O glorious hour,
When by His own Almighty power
He rose, and left the grave!
Now let our songs His triumph tell,
Who burst the bands of death and hell,
And ever lives to save."

"Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ" (Rev. xii. 10).—*Epistle for the Feast of St. Michael and all Angels.*

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The Parting Blessing.

LUKE xxiv. 44-51.

"AND He said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you,[1] while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning Me. Then opened He their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of My Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high. And He led them out as far as to Bethany, and He lifted up His hands, and blessed them.[2] And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven."

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[1] "That is, 'This is the fulfilment of the words.' When Christ had told them that all things written of Him in the Old Testament must be fulfilled, they had not understood how much His words meant (*see* xviii. 31-34). He now shows them that all the strange and startling events they had lately witnessed —His Sufferings, His Death, His Resurrection—were a perfect fulfilment of ancient prophecy."

[2] "Our Lord's last act on earth is to bless. Even as He ascends, His Hands are stretched out in blessing. And we may think of Him still in that His parting attitude, for from the right hand of God He is evermore shedding down His blessings upon His Church."—*Canon How.*

"May He give us grace to lay more to our heart than ever hitherto His great Ascension lesson; that as we verily believe our Lord Jesus Christ to have ascended into the Heavens, and there to sit on the right hand of the Father, so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell; citizens of Heaven, while we toil, and pray, and, if it be His will, suffer upon earth; our bodies, our work, our warfare down below, but our minds continually drawn up, by His loving grace, to high and heavenly things. Be this the blessed, the holy, the happy lot of every one amongst us, for the sake of the same ascended Lord, Jesus Christ, our only Saviour and Redeemer."—*Moberly's "Brighstone Sermons."*

"Hark! His gracious Lips bestow
Blessings on His Church below:
Still for us He intercedes."

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OCTOBER 1.

"The Lamb of God."

JOHN i. 35-42.

"THE next day after John stood, and two of his disciples; and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God! And the two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus.[1] Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto Him, Rabbi, (which is to say, being interpreted, Master,) where dwellest Thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour. One of the two which heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first findeth his own brother Simon,[2] and saith unto him, We have found the Messias, Which is, being interpreted, the Christ. And he brought him to Jesus. And when Jesus beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: thou shalt be called Cephas, which is by interpretation, A stone."[3]

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[1] "In these two the 'Voice crying in the wilderness' had prepared the way of the Lord. The Baptist led them to the Lamb of God. They had been baptized with the baptism of repentance; they were going to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire. So it often is. 'Elias must first come.' The stern preacher of repentance is he who leads the sinner to Christ."

[2] "The proof of our having really *found Christ* is seen in our finding our brother and bringing him to Christ. We find Christ by caring for the souls of our brethren."—*Bede, quoted by Wordsworth.*

[3] . . . "'Cephas' is the Jewish word, as 'Peter' is the Greek, for 'rock' or 'stone,' and the name is given prophetically, partly in respect of Peter's character as bold and determined, and partly in respect of his being a foundation-stone of the Church of Christ."—*Canon How.*

"First seek thy Saviour out, and dwell
Beneath the shadow of His roof,
Till thou have scanned His features well,
And known Him for the Christ by proof;

Such proof as they are sure to find
Who spend with Him their happy days,
Clean hands, and a self-ruling mind
Ever in tune for love and praise.

Then, potent with the spell of Heaven,
Go, and thine erring brother gain,
Entice him home to be forgiven,
Till he, too, see his Saviour plain."—*Keble.*

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OCTOBER 2.

Philip and Nathanael.

JOHN i. 43-51.

"THE day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow Me.[1] Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the Law, and the Prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Joseph. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see.[2] Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee. Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig-tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these. And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

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[1] "One word—the one pregnant invitation, 'Follow Me!' was sufficient to attach to Jesus for ever the gentle and simple-minded Apostle."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Hidden close from human eye
Violets do love to lie,
Only for the tell-tale air,
No one could discover where;
But there's an Eye which on them dwells
With sunshine, soft and true,
A Hand which fills their purple bells
With drops of morning dew.

So beneath the fig-tree's shade,
Where, of old, Nathanael paid
To the Lord his hidden vows;
Through its broad umbrageous boughs,
Upon the saint's lone hour of need,
Fell Heaven's approving smile,
And owned 'an Israelite indeed,'
'In whom' there was 'no guile.'"

Thence the saint, unknown and lowly,
Set apart by God, and holy,
Changed in office, and in name,
Saint Bartholomew became;
And on his day, the Church doth pray
Of God, in Jesu's Name,
'To love that Word which he believed,'
'Preach, and receive the same.'"—*Monsell.*

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OCTOBER 3.

The Marriage in Cana.

JOHN ii. 1-11.

"THERE was a marriage in Cana of Galilee; and the mother of Jesus was there: and both Jesus was called, and His disciples, to the marriage. And when they wanted wine, the mother of Jesus saith unto Him, They have no wine. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come. His mother saith unto the servants, Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it. And there were set there six waterpots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins apiece. Jesus saith unto them, Fill the waterpots with water. And they filled them up to the brim. And He saith unto them, Draw out now, and bear unto the governor of the feast. And they bare it. When the ruler of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and knew not whence it was: (but the servants which drew the water knew;) the governor of the feast called the bridegroom, and saith unto him, Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; and when men have well drunk, then that which is worse: but thou hast kept the good wine until now. This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee,[1] and manifested forth His glory; and His disciples believed on Him."[2]

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[1] "Thus the 'holy estate' which Christ adorned and beautified with His Presence and first miracle in Cana of Galilee foreshadows the mystical union between Christ and His Church, and the common element which He thus miraculously changed becomes a type of our life on earth transfigured and ennobled by the anticipated joys of Heaven—a type of that wine which He shall drink new with us in the kingdom of God, at the marriage supper of the Lamb."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

. . . "Let our rule be so to enter into society as that we should welcome Christ's presence with us, and so to act in society as we should act if He were present, and then we shall be safe."—*Canon How.*

"He shares our griefs, let us our joys
With Him devoutly share,
And every festive day we keep
Be our Redeemer there!"—*Monsell.*

[2] "His disciples believed on Him." "Again and again they believed, *new degrees* of faith being attained."—*Alford.*

"Blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed" (John xx. 29).

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OCTOBER 4.

The Desecration of the Temple.

JOHN ii. 13-22.

"THE Jews' Passover was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem, and found in the Temple those that sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the changers of money sitting: and when He had made a scourge of small cords, He drove them all out of the Temple, and the sheep, and the oxen; and poured out the changers' money, and overthrew the tables;[1] and said unto them that sold doves, Take these things hence; make not My Father's House an house of merchandise.[2] And His disciples remembered that it was written, The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up (Ps. lxix. 9). Then answered the Jews and said unto Him, What sign showest Thou unto us, seeing that Thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this Temple in building, and wilt Thou rear it up in three days? But He spake of the Temple of His body.[3] When therefore He was risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this unto them; and they believed the Scripture, and the word which Jesus had said."

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[1] "Our Lord's acts on this occasion were plainly acts of strong indignation and righteous violence. They are in truth a fulfilment of the great prophecy of Malachi (*see* Mal. iii. 1-3). Jesus is generally presented to us in exceeding love and tenderness. Here we have a vision of the 'wrath of the Lamb.' By His act of vengeance He teaches the truth which His Apostle declares,—'If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.' . . . Anger is above all righteous when aroused by wrongs done to God."—*Canon How.*

"The Temple reminded Jesus of the habitation of holiness and glory from which He came. It rang with the echoes of that worship of the Angels with which He had been familiar, and of which He had been the object. . . . And the homes of *Christian* ordinances, which are (equally with the Jewish Temple) God's houses of prayer, are surely, no less than that was, representatives of heaven; . . . they have their services of praise and thanksgiving, as heaven has; they have the memorial of Christ's atoning death, which death He Himself pleads for us in the courts above; and they are the scenes of a communion with God more close, more solemn, more elevating than ever the Temple was. Churches and church worship are shadows of heaven and representatives of it upon earth."—*Goulburn's "Cathedral System."*

[2] "Surely *they* still make God's House 'an house of merchandise' who carry thither anxieties about their secular concerns, and allow thoughts about trade, hopes and fears about the market, to find place in the sanctuary of God."—*Burgon.*

[3] "St. Paul compares the body to a temple (1 Cor. vi. 19; 2 Cor. vi. 16; Eph. ii. 21, 22). It is indeed but a tabernacle in which the spirit abides for a short season here on earth."—*Canon How.*

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Regeneration.

JOHN iii. 1-6.

"THERE was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: the same came to Jesus by night,[1] and said unto Him, Rabbi, we know that Thou art a Teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that Thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto Him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,[2] he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh;[3] and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit."

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[1] "It was spiritual darkness with him, as well as natural, when he came; but he came to the 'Light of the world,' and light began to dawn upon his soul. . . . He was honestly seeking more light, and behold how bright a flood of light was poured upon him as he listened to Christ's wondrous words! It is surely true of spiritual knowledge that 'he that seeketh findeth;' and we see too that God does not despise even the timid seeker."

[2] "Our Lord thus enlarges, and in part explains, His simpler words 'born again' (ver. 3). He declares the outward sign, and the inward Agent, of the new or heavenly birth. That in the mention of water our Lord speaks of Baptism can hardly be doubted. . . . And with regard to the unanimous consent of the primitive Church, Hooker affirms that 'of all the ancients there is not one to be named that ever did otherwise expound or allege this place than as implying external Baptism.' . . . All ancient writers from the very first use the term 'regeneration,' or 'new birth,' solely of Baptism and its effects, and never in the sense, often given to it in modern days, of 'conversion' or 'renewal.' . . . Our Church uses the word in its primitive sense, of the new birth into the family of God's adopted children in Baptism. She founds her Baptismal Service on this verse, quoting it in the very opening sentence."

[3] "That is, the nature we receive from our natural parents is, like their own, fallen, corrupt, sinful; while the nature which is implanted in us by the Spirit of God in our new birth is, like its Author, spiritual and divine."—*Canon How.*

"Vouchsafe me Thy Holy Spirit, O God. . . . Create in me a saving knowledge of Thee; true sanctification, an ardent love, and a filial fear of Thee, a constant desire of pleasing Thee, and a great tenderness of offending Thee."
—*Bishop Ken.*

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The New Birth.

JOHN iii. 7-13.

"MARVEL not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth :[1] so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto Him, How can these things be?[2] Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?[3] Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that We do know, and testify that We have seen; and ye receive not Our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that came down from heaven, even the Son of Man Which is in heaven."[4]

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[1] "Jesus would say, 'Thou marvellest when I tell thee of the Spirit's hidden work; yet think if there be not like marvels in the world of nature.' The *effects* of the wind are readily seen and felt, and yet it is itself invisible, and hidden in its movements. So the *effects* of the new birth and of the Spirit's presence are plain, while the working of that Spirit Itself is a hidden mystery. To question in what manner or at what moment the Spirit's work in our souls began is of less importance than to ask, 'Are we bearing the fruits of the Spirit now?'"

[2] Nicodemus "feels his ignorance, and seeks to be enlightened. Yet it would have been better to have been able to say, 'Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief.' He is in fault in that he thinks he must understand in order to believe."

[3] "As an appointed teacher of others Nicodemus ought surely to have known something of these things. The very types of Baptism in the Scriptures might have taught him much, or at least have prepared him to receive readily Christ's teaching. Thus the Spirit of God brooding upon the face of the water before the Creation; the Flood wherein Noah and his family were saved by water (*see* 1 Peter iii. 20, 21), the passing of the Israelites through the Red Sea (*see* 1 Cor. x. 2), the cleansing of Naaman the Syrian by washing in the Jordan (*see* 2 Kings v. 14); these might have prepared a Jewish teacher to accept the truths which Jesus was revealing. But the fault of Nicodemus was the fault of all the Jews. They lacked all spiritual insight into their own Scriptures. They erred, 'not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God'" (Matt. xxii. 29).

[4] "He only can reveal heavenly things Who came down from heaven to take to Himself our human nature and to become 'Son of Man,' but Who in His Divine nature is still 'in Heaven,' the Eternal Word, Himself God, and 'with God'" (i. 1).—*Canon How.*

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OCTOBER 7.

The Father's Love.

JOHN iii. 14-21.

"AND as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.[1] For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.[2] For God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved. He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."

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[1] . . . "Our whole lives should be one continued looking unto Him, one continued act of faith in that undeserved and complete deliverance which He wrought for us upon the Cross. Jesus Christ, lifted up upon the Cross, should draw our whole hearts to Him."—*P. Young.*

[2] "'Comfortable words' indeed, as our beautiful Communion Service calls them! These are not words to comment upon, but to *feel*. In this glorious verse every word is a sermon. Mark the greatness of the Father's love:—'God *so* loved.' Mark the breadth of that love:—'God so loved *the world*.' Mark the pricelessness of the Sacrifice:—'His only begotten Son.' Mark the freedom of the offer of salvation:—'Whosoever.' Mark the condition of salvation:—'Believeth.' Mark the peril of unbelief:—'Perish.' Mark the greatness of the salvation:—'Everlasting Life.'"—*Canon How.*

"When we know what Christ is to us, that He delivers from death, sets our feet in the way of peace, reconciles us to God, and makes us fit for God, we shall know where to look for our joy, and keep a steady eye upon the light which guides us to Him."—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

. . . . "The woe,
Which makes the doom of evil, is to see
That Face averted. We who shut Love out,
Shall be shut out from Love."

—"*Lazarus and other Poems*," *by the Rev. E. H. Plumptre, D.D.*

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OCTOBER 8.

The Woman of Samaria.

JOHN iv. 5-14.

"THEN cometh He to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water:[1] Jesus saith unto her, Give Me to drink. (For His disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that Thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God,[2] and Who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of Him,[3] and He would have given thee living water. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, Thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast Thou that living water? Art Thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle? Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

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[1] "She came 'to draw water' from the well, little suspecting that before her return to the city she should draw her first draught of living water out of the Well of Salvation!"—*Burgon.*

[2] "Namely, that great and most blessed gift which I am about to offer thee—the 'living water.' . . . By 'living water' is meant water freshly flowing from a spring, a beautiful image of the life-giving, purifying Spirit" (*see* vii. 38, 39).

[3] "Without asking there is no receiving. Our Saviour elsewhere tells us that God will 'give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him'" (Luke xi. 13).—*Canon How.*

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
Behold, I freely give
The living water, thirsty one,
Stoop down and drink and live;

I came to Jesus, and I drank
Of that life-giving stream;
My thirst was quenched, my soul revived,
And now I live in Him."

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The Messiah.

JOHN iv. 15-26.

"THE woman saith unto Him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: for thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly. The woman saith unto Him, Sir, I perceive that Thou art a Prophet. Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe Me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. The woman saith unto Him, I know that Messias cometh, Which is called Christ: when He is come, He will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am He."[1]

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[1] "His birth had been first revealed by night to a few unknown and ignorant shepherds; the first full, clear announcement by Himself of His own Messiahship was made by a well-side in the weary noon to a single obscure Samaritan woman. And to this poor, sinful, ignorant stranger had been uttered words of immortal significance, to which all future ages would listen, as it were, with hushed breath, and on their knees."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"He comes, the prisoners to release
In Satan's bondage held;
The gates of brass before Him burst,
The iron fetters yield.
He comes, the broken hearts to bind,
The bleeding souls to cure,
And with the treasures of His grace
To bless the humble poor."

"Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (1 Tim. i. 15).

"Christ still manifests His Messiahship by His Presence, and says to the desiring soul, as He did to the woman of Samaria, 'I that speak unto thee am He.'"—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

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OCTOBER 10.

Working for God.

JOHN iv. 31-38.

"IN the mean while His disciples prayed Him, saying, Master, eat. But He said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought Him ought to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work. Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest. And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together. And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth. I sent you to reap that whereon ye bestowed no labour: other men laboured, and ye are entered into their labours."

"Have a work to do daily, with a will to it, and a prayer upon it, and let that work be God's."—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

"Do not the *Work of God negligently* and idly; 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;' let not thy heart be upon the world when thy hand is lift up in prayer; and be sure to prefer an action of religion in its place and proper season, before all worldly pleasure, letting secular things (that may be dispensed with in themselves) in these circumstances wait upon the other. In honouring God and doing His work put forth all thy strength; for of that time only thou mayest be most confident that it is gained which is prudently and zealously spent in God's service. God hath given every man work enough to do, that there shall be no room for idleness; and yet hath so ordered the world that there shall be space for devotion. He that hath the fewest businesses is called upon to spend more time in the dressing of his soul; and he that hath the most affairs may so order them that they shall be a service of God, whilst at certain periods they are blessed with prayers and actions of religion, and all day long hallowed by a holy *intention*."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

"God is my End, Christ is my Way, the Spirit my Guide."—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

"What is the work which God has given thee to do? . . . Let each one ask his own conscience this plain question, and listen faithfully for the answer: 'Am I doing, or even trying to do, the work which God sent me into the world to accomplish?'"—*Rev. G. H. Curteis.*

"Fill up each hour with what will last;
Buy up the moments as they go;
The life above when this is past,
Is the ripe fruit of life below."—*Bonar.*

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OCTOBER 11.

Cure of the Nobleman's Son.

JOHN iv. 46-53.

"AND there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judæa into Galilee, he went unto Him, and besought Him that He would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death. Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe. The nobleman saith unto Him, Sir, come down ere my child die.[1] Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth.[2] And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. Then inquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house."[3]

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[1] "How often do trouble and sorrow teach the first lesson of 'effectual, fervent prayer!'"—*Canon How.*

[2] "There is here again something to be learned by a comparison of the Lord's dealing with this man and with the centurion of the other Gospels. Here, being entreated to come, He does not, but sends His healing word. There, being asked to speak that word of healing, He rather proposes Himself to come. For here, as Chrysostom well brings out, a narrow and poor faith is enlarged and deepened; there a strong faith is crowned and rewarded. By not going He increases this nobleman's faith; by offering to go He brings out and honours that centurion's humility. Nor shall we fail to observe by the difference of His conduct in the two cases how far was our Lord from being an 'accepter of persons.' He will not come but only send to the son of this nobleman; He is ready to visit in His own Person the servant of that centurion."—*Archbishop Trench.*

[3] "We may hence see that there are degrees of faith, as of other virtues, which have their beginning, their increase, and their perfecting. This man's faith had its beginning when he asked for healing for his son; its increase when he believed the Lord's words, 'Thy son liveth;' it was perfected when he received the servant's news."—*The Venerable Bede, quoted by Trench.*

"We run readily enough to Christ when sorrow is upon us. . . . If we go to Him in bodily ailments, how much more in those of the soul! Do not delay when temptation begins, lest sin and death follow" (Hos. v. 15).—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

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OCTOBER 12.

The Pool of Bethesda.

JOHN v. 2-9.

"NOW there is at Jerusalem by the sheep market a pool, which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water. For an Angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made whole of whatsoever disease he had. And a certain man was there,[1] which had an infirmity thirty and eight years. When Jesus saw him lie, and knew that he had been now a long time in that case, He saith unto him, Wilt thou be made whole? The impotent man answered Him, Sir, I have no man, when the water is troubled, to put me into the pool: but while I am coming, another steppeth down before me.[2] Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the Sabbath."

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[1] "Jesus chose out one only of all that 'great multitude,' partly perhaps in compassion for his long sufferings, but chiefly, we can hardly doubt, with a special view to his spiritual state, and the fruit which his healing of body would produce in his soul. For thirty-eight years this poor sufferer had patiently waited in hope that God would at last show him mercy. What a lesson, that man ought always to hope, and not to faint! And what a rebuke to our restlessness and impatience under little trials! May we not also see in this miracle a pledge that even the hardened sinner need not despair? There is surely healing for the soul, as well as for the body, after many years of infirmity. God be thanked that it is so."—*Canon How.*

[2] "The most helpless in himself, he was for that reason nearest to the help of Christ."—*Churton.*

"God, by afflictions, often fits us for greater degrees of grace which He is going to bestow. . . . Let me never murmur, be dejected, or impatient, under any of the troubles of this life, but ever find rest and comfort in this—*This is the will of my Father, and of my God;* grant this for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Our Lord saw him, pitied him, and proved him. 'Wilt thou be made whole?' This is, thanks to God, the great question of the Gospel. Wilt thou? What, then, are my desires? Do I cleave to sin, or do I hunger and thirst after righteousness?" (John v. 40; 2 Cor. viii. 12).—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

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OCTOBER 13.

In the Temple.

JOHN v. 10-18.

"THE Jews therefore said unto him that was cured, It is the Sabbath Day: it is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed. He answered them, He that made me whole, the same said unto me, Take up thy bed, and walk. Then asked they him, What man is that which said unto thee, Take up thy bed, and walk? And he that was healed wist not who it was: for Jesus had conveyed Himself away, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus findeth him in the Temple,[1] and said unto him, Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee.[2] The man departed, and told the Jews that it was Jesus, Which had made him whole. And therefore did the Jews persecute Jesus, and sought to slay Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath Day. But Jesus answered them, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.[3] Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He not only had broken the Sabbath, but said also that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."

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[1] "We naturally and willingly believe that he was there returning thanks for the great mercy so lately vouchsafed him (Acts iii. 8). But He, Whose purpose it was to build upon the healing of the body the better healing of the soul, suffers not this matter to conclude without a word of solemn warning; a word which showed that all the past life of the sufferer lay open and manifest before Him, even things done more than thirty-eight years ago, before, that is, His own earthly life had commenced."

[2] . . . "This infirmity had withered up all his manhood, and yet 'a worse thing' even than this is threatened him should he sin again."—*Trench on "The Miracles."*

[3] "Man needs rest, and his Sabbath must be a day of rest. But God needs no rest, and when it is said He rested on the seventh day, it is only of the work of creating that it is said; for God's love works eternally in upholding and in blessing His creation. Thus when a Sabbath is employed in works of mercy, it is employed most nearly as God employs His rest of ceaseless lovingkindness. So Christ says, 'I am only acting as My Father acts in working works of mercy on the Sabbath day.'"—*Canon How.*

"From condemning others and justifying ourselves, from misspending our time and abusing Thy grace, from calling good evil, and evil good . . . Good Lord, deliver and preserve us for ever."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

"Without Him Sunday's self were dim,
And all are bright if spent with Him."—"*Christian Lyrics.*"

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OCTOBER 14.

The Believer, who "hath everlasting Life."

JOHN v. 19-24.

"THEN answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself,[1] but what He seeth the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth Him all things that Himself doeth: and He will show Him greater works than these, that ye may marvel. For as the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom He will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father Which hath sent Him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life,[2] and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

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[1] "This does not mean 'The Son is powerless by Himself,' but 'the Son cannot in His very nature, and because of His oneness with the Father, act separately from the Father.' They are One, and their work is one."

[2] "Such a believer, Christ says, already 'hath everlasting life.' He has already entered even here upon that life which, when perfected, shall be his for ever. For the spiritual life here is but the first imperfect stage of the eternal life hereafter."—*Canon How.*

"His thoughts are not as yours, nor are His ways
As your ways,—dubious, changeful, dark, unsure;
His are the thoughts eternal, infinite;
Thoughts like Himself, unchanging, true and pure.

To think His thoughts is blessedness supreme;
To know Himself, the Thinker, is our life;
To rest this weary intellect on His,
Is the glad ending of mind's endless strife.

For this is life eternal, Him to know,
And Jesus Christ His Son, Whom He hath sent;
And this is light, to walk in His dear love;
Light brighter than the noon-bright firmament."—*Bonar.*

"Everlasting Life, what is it? Life is consciousness. Everlasting Life is the consciousness of the Eternal. It is the teaching of God. . . . How earnestly should we pray to the Incarnate Wisdom, Grant us in this world knowledge of Thy Truth, and in the world to come Life Everlasting!"—*Benson's "Bible Teachings."*

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OCTOBER 15.

The Coming Hour.

JOHN v. 25-30.

"VERILY, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live.[1] For as the Father hath life in Himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice,[2] and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. I can of Mine own Self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father Which hath sent Me."[3]

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[1] "By the 'dead' is here meant the spiritually dead,—those dead in 'trespasses and sins.' Thus this verse is a continuation of the last, which speaks of a resurrection to spiritual life."

[2] "Compare this verse with 25. That speaks of spiritual resurrection; this of bodily" (*see* Dan. xii. 2).—*Canon How.*

"Our hearts enlighten from above,
And kindle with Thine own true love;
That we, who hear Thy call to-day,
May cast earth's vanities away.

And when as Judge Thou drawest nigh,
The secrets of all hearts to try;
When sinners meet their awful doom,
And Saints attain their heavenly home;

O let us not, for evil past,
Be driven from Thy Face at last;
But with the blessèd evermore
Behold Thee, love Thee, and adore."

[3] "Christ, as Man, had a separate human will, yet never one contrary to the will of God. This is plainly shown in His prayer in the Garden, 'Not My will, but Thine be done.' Thus 'I seek not Mine own will' means, not 'I seek not to *indulge* Mine own will,' but rather, 'I seek not to have a will of My own; I sink and lose My human will in the Divine.'"—*Canon How.*

"We must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ" (2 Cor. v. 10).

"Now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. vi. 2).

"O watch and pray ere Advent dawn!
For thinner than the subtlest lawn
'Twixt thee and death the veil is drawn."—*Keble.*

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Christ and His Father.

JOHN v. 31-38.

"IF I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is Another that beareth witness of Me; and I know that the witness which He witnesseth of Me is true. Ye sent unto John, and he bare witness unto the truth.[1] But I receive not testimony from man: but these things I say, that ye might be saved. He was a burning and a shining light: and ye were willing for a season to rejoice in his light. But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me. And the Father Himself, Which hath sent Me, hath borne witness of Me. Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His shape. And ye have not His word abiding in you: for Whom He hath sent, Him ye believe not."

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[1] "Of St. John the Baptist it has been said, that 'in his manifestation and agency he was like a burning torch;' his public life was quite an earthquake—the whole man was a sermon; he might well call himself 'a voice'—the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord."—*Lange.*

"Jesus tells them that He had far loftier witness than that of John—the witness of a miraculous power, exerted not as prophets had exerted it, in the Name of God, but in His own Name, because His Father had given such power into His hand. That Father they knew not; His light they had abandoned for the darkness; His word for their own falsehoods and ignorances; and they were rejecting Him Whom He had sent."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves" (2 Cor. xiii. 5).

"If faith fail prayer perishes; so then that we may pray let us believe; and that this same faith whereby we pray fail not, let us pray. Faith pours out prayer, and the pouring out of prayer obtains the strengthening of faith."—*St. Augustine.*

"The Gospel will not be a means of salvation to him who reads or hears it only, but to him who reads, loves, remembers, and practises it by a lively faith."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"The Scripture is light and truth from God. . . . With what a mixture of fear, reverence, and holy joy should we open the Bible!"—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

"I humbly pray to be enabled to attend more to my secret devotions; to pray over Scripture; to interlace thoughts of God and Christ; to be more humble, and more bold for Christ."—*William Wilberforce.*

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OCTOBER 17.

Moses and Christ.

JOHN v. 39-47.

"SEARCH the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of Me. And ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life. I receive not honour from men. But I know you, that ye have not the love of God in you. I am come in My Father's Name, and ye receive Me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.[1] How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?[2] Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father: there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed Me: for he wrote of Me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe My words?"[3]

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[1] . . . "If they knew nothing of the Father, they at least knew, or thought they knew, the Scriptures; the Scriptures were in their hands; they had counted the very letters of them: yet they were rejecting Him of Whom the Scriptures testified. Was it not clear that they—the righteous, the pious, the scrupulous, the separatists, the priests, the religious leaders of their nation—yet had not the love of God in them, if they thus rejected His Prophet, His Word, His works, His Son? And what was the fibre of bitterness within them which produced all this bitter fruit? Was it not *pride*? How *could* they believe who sought honour of one another, and not the honour that cometh of God only? . . . And yet He would not accuse them to the Father; they had another accuser, even Moses, in whom they trusted. Yes, Moses, in whose lightest word they professed to trust . . . even *him* they were disbelieving and disobeying. Had they believed Moses, they would have believed Him Who spoke to them, for Moses wrote of Him; but if they thus rejected the true meaning of the written words which they professed to adore and love, how could they believe the spoken words to which they were listening with rage and hate?"—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

[2] "The love of human praise is fatal to a living faith. For the one seeks a visible earthly reward, the other an invisible and heavenly."

[3] . . . "Those who reject or neglect the light and the evidence God has given them will not be likely to learn new truths or advance to higher knowledge. . . . Our Lord does not say 'Read,' but 'Search,' for the Scriptures are a mine in which many precious jewels lie far below the surface."—*Canon How.*

"Thy Word, a wondrous guiding Star,
On pilgrim hearts doth rise;
Leads to their Lord, Who dwells afar,
And makes the simple wise."—"*Lyra Germanica.*"

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OCTOBER 18.

Miraculous Food.

JOHN vi. 5-13.

"WHEN Jesus then lifted up His eyes, and saw a great company come unto Him, He saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? And this He said to prove him: for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, Two hundred pennyworth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may take a little. One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him, There is a lad here, which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes: but what are they among so many?[1] And Jesus said, Make the men sit down. Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves; and when He had given thanks,[2] He distributed to the disciples, and the disciples to them that were set down; and likewise of the fishes as much as they would. When they were filled, He said unto His disciples, Gather up[3] the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost. Therefore they gathered them together, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves, which remained over and above unto them that had eaten."

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[1] "What are they among so many?"] "Nothing—to the eye of sense; enough, and more than enough—to the eye of faith. Is not a like question sometimes asked by the unbeliever with regard to the simple elements by which the Saviour dispenses to so many His Sacramental blessing? 'What are they—the consecrated bread and wine—to feed the hungry multitudes?' Christ answers not, but blesses, and breaks, and feeds."

[2] "Given thanks."] "This is recorded in both the miracles, a lesson surely to all. If the Son of God did not break the bread without thanksgiving, how much less should we? (*see* Mark viii. 6)."—*Canon How.*

"For all that God in mercy sends,
For health and children, home and friends,
For comfort in the time of need,
For every kindly word and deed,
For happy thoughts and holy talk,—
For guidance in our daily walk,—
For everything give thanks!

For the sweet sleep which comes with night,
For the returning morning's light,
For the bright sun that shines on high,
For the stars glittering in the sky,
For these and everything we see,
O Lord, our hearts we lift to Thee!
For everything give thanks."

—*E. I. Tupper.*

[3] "Gather up."] "Thus is all waste of His bountiful gifts condemned by the Divine Giver."—*Canon How.*

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OCTOBER 19.

The Voice in the Storm.

JOHN vi. 16-21.

"WHEN even was now come, His disciples went down unto the sea, and entered into a ship, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was now dark, and Jesus was not come to them.[1] And the sea arose by reason of a great wind that blew. So when they had rowed about five and twenty or thirty furlongs, they see Jesus walking on the sea, and drawing nigh unto the ship: and they were afraid. But He saith unto them, It is I; be not afraid. Then they willingly received Him into the ship: and immediately the ship was at the land whither they went."[2]

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[1] "Our Lord was training His disciples in higher and higher degrees of faith. In a former storm He was with them in the ship, so that they could turn to Him at any moment (*see* Matt. viii. 23-26). Now He leaves them seemingly in great peril alone. 'He will not have them to be clinging only to the sense of His Bodily Presence; . . . this time He puts them forth into the danger alone, even as some loving mother-bird thrusts her fledgelings from the nest, that they may find their own wings, and learn to use them.'"—*Trench.*

"Observe Jesus '*constrained*' (Mark vi. 45) the disciples to go in the boat. It was *His* doing, not their own. So when troubles and trials beset Christ's servants, and it is dark around them, they must not think that He has forsaken them, or is far away. Perhaps He has sent His servants into the trouble, as He sent His disciples into the storm, to teach them that, even in the darkest, dreadest hour, He is near to save."

[2] "This seems to be another miracle, not mentioned by the other Evangelists. Is it not thus with many in the voyage of life? They seem to make little progress; they are yet far from the point they aim at. But if Christ comes and finds them toiling onward, He will do the rest, and take them immediately to the land whither they are going."—*Canon How.*

"Thou Framer of the light and dark,
Steer through the tempest Thine own ark;
Amid the howling wintry sea
We are in port if we have Thee."—*Keble.*

"Go calmly along your way, with full confidence in God's mercy, which will lead you safely to the Heavenly Home."—"*Spiritual Letters of S. Francis de Sales.*"

"Submit to His guidance, for He can control
The sins and the sorrows that burden thy soul;
The storm and the whirlwind, His creatures are they,
And the proud waves of ocean His whispers obey."
—"*Lays of the Pious Minstrels.*."

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OCTOBER 20.

Faith in Christ.

JOHN vi. 25-29.

"AND when they had found Him on the other side of the sea, they said unto Him, Rabbi, when camest Thou hither? Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek Me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you: for Him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto Him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him Whom He hath sent."

"A life of faith in the Son of God is a life which is guided and ruled by love to Him; a life in which the heart continually tastes the blessedness of pardon and of peace; a life in which the thought of Christ and of His love is ever present to deter us from sin, to incite us to holiness; a life in which every new sin and every new sorrow is brought to the feet of Jesus, and left with Him,—the sins to be washed away, and the sorrows to be turned into joy. . . . We may well ask ourselves, Is ours a faith like this; a faith not merely to speak about, but a faith by which we live; a faith which worketh by love? What fruit do we see of our faith in our daily lives? Does it make us better men and women; does it make us care less about this passing world, and more about the everlasting joys of the world to come? Does our faith in Christ help us to love Christ? does it move us to give up our lives to Him Who gave up His life for us? What a blessed thing it would be for us if our lives were lives like this; if each of us could say in truth as St. Paul said, 'I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me' (Gal. ii. 20)."—*Rev. W. D. Maclagan.*

"'Who is sufficient for these things?' 'My grace is sufficient for thee'" (2 Cor. xii. 9).

"We ask not that our path be always bright,
But for Thine aid to walk therein aright;
That Thou, O Lord! through all its devious way,
Wilt give us strength sufficient to our day,
For this, for this we pray.

Not for the fleeting joys that earth bestows,
Not from exemption from its many woes;
But that, come joy or woe, come good or ill,
With childlike faith we trust Thy guidance still,
And do Thy holy Will."—*W. H. Burleigh.*

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OCTOBER 21.

"The Bread of Life."

JOHN vi. 30-35.

"THEY said therefore unto Him, What sign showest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee? what dost Thou work? Our fathers did eat manna in the desert; as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Moses gave you not that bread from heaven;[1] but My Father giveth you the True Bread from heaven. For the Bread of God is He Which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. Then said they unto Him, Lord, evermore give us this Bread. And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life:[2] He that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst."[3]

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[1] . . . "Christ would teach His hearers that even the bread their fathers ate in the desert, which was not the 'True Bread,' was not given by Moses, but by God Himself. Mark how our Lord, according to His frequent custom, answers not the question asking for a sign, except by leading the questioners to higher thoughts concerning Himself; for what were all miracles and signs to the one great miracle and sign—Christ Himself, 'God manifest in the flesh?'"

[2] "I am the Bread of Life."] "Our Lord now first distinctly states that it is of Himself that He is speaking. He is the Bread of Life—the living, and life-giving, Bread. The manna in the desert, no less than the bread with which the five thousand had been fed, was a type of Himself. How marvellous is the truth which thus slowly unfolds itself!"

[3] "'Cometh' and 'believeth' in this verse are but two parts of the same act,—the coming the outward, the believing the inward. By never hungering and thirsting is signified the complete supply of all their spiritual needs. A living faith, bringing us to Christ and uniting us with Him, will find all it wants in Him."

"O Jesus, Who hast made the life of our souls to depend upon this Bread, grant that I may never render myself unworthy to receive so great a blessing, or deprive myself of it by my own negligence. Make it a principle of immortal life to me, by uniting me to Thee and to Thy Body, that I may be made partaker of a Divine nature."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Doubt not, but come; . . .
Absolved, forgiven, washed in His precious Blood,
And with His Body fed,
As giants ye shall run your race, indwelt
By Him, the 'Living Bread.'"—*C. F. H.*

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OCTOBER 22.

"The Father's Will."

JOHN vi. 36-40.

"BUT I said unto you, That ye also have seen Me, and believe not. All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.[1] For I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me. And this is the Father's will Which hath sent Me, that of all which He hath given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day. And this is the will of Him that sent Me, that every one which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

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[1] "In no wise! How broad is the door of welcome! 'God,' says a holy writer, 'is like one on his knees, with tears in his eyes, and extreme fervour in his soul, beseeching the sinner to be saved!' He met the prodigal son half-way. Ere the ungrateful wanderer could stammer forth through penitential tears the confession of his sins, the arms of mercy were around him. The prodigal thought of no more than the menial's place; the Father had in readiness the best robe and the fatted calf! . . . He refuses none—He welcomes all! The poor, the wretched, the blind, the naked, the burdened, the heavy-laden; the hardened sinner, the aged sinner, the daring sinner, the dying sinner. . . . 'When *we* forgive, it costs us an effort; when God forgives, it is His delight. From the battlements of heaven He is calling after us: 'Turn ye! turn ye! Why will ye die?'"

"Believer! let the attribute of Holiness be the superscription written on your heart and life. Abounding grace can give no sanction or encouragement to abound in sin. 'His mercy,' says Bishop Reynolds, 'is a holy mercy which knows how to pardon sin, not to protect it; it is a sanctuary for the penitent, not for the presumptuous.'"—*"The Night Watches."*

"God made us for Eternity, and His aim in all He does is to bring us happily to it. Hence the necessity of pain, sickness, crosses, to break the strong chain which binds us to the world, and force us to take part with God in His grand design."—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

"'My mission!' 'tis to do what e'er my Heavenly Father sends,
To fulfil the present duty with the present strength He lends,
It may not be just what I wish, but then, since He knows best,
Oh! let me strive to do His Will, and leave with Him the rest:
Assured that if He gives a life of labour or of pain,
So it be sanctified by Him, I cannot live in vain."—*Anon.*

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The Murmuring of the Jews.

JOHN vi. 41-47.

"THE Jews then murmured at Him, because He said, I am the Bread Which came down from heaven. And they said, Is not this Jesus, the Son of Joseph, Whose father and mother we know? how is it then that He saith, I came down from heaven? Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves. No man can come to Me, except the Father Which hath sent Me draw him :[1] and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father, save He Which is of God, He hath seen the Father. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life."[2]

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[1] "Must man then wait contentedly and without any effort until God draw him? Surely no. 'The words,' says St. Chrysostom, 'do not take away our free will, but show that we greatly need assistance' (*see* Phil. ii. 12, 13)."—*Canon How.*

"Be sure that prayer and effort can do anything. Prayer alone will not do; for prayer without effort, crying without trying, is sheer hypocrisy. Effort alone will not do; for effort without prayer is simple presumption. . . . Pray, therefore, as earnestly as if you could do nothing by yourself; act as resolutely as if you could do all by yourself; and then be sure that, though you may fail for a time, yet by grace you will at length be strengthened to that 'patient endurance in well-doing' which marks all who are 'disciples indeed,' and which has for its reward 'glory, honour, immortality,' and 'eternal life' (Rom. ii. 7)."—*Rev. J. Erskine Clarke.*

[2] "Are *we* believing in Him? Are we following Him? Are we striving to learn from Him? . . . Do we seek and accept life from Him? Do we drink of the water of life which He giveth us? Do we take the Bread of life which He feeds us with? These are serious questions for us. Do not let us put off the answer to them till night comes upon us, and it is too late to ask or to answer them. All the questions in the world besides are nothing to these questions, for on them depends our happiness now and our happiness for ever."—*Sermon by Bishop Harold Browne.*

"Of old they had murmured against Moses with reference to the old manna. Now they murmur against Jesus while He makes them the promise of the new manna. Alas! that not only should they have murmured before receiving, but that the heavenly gift should have been so continual a source of murmuring, as it has been ever since! . . . Earthly life must come to an end. Jesus gives us this Food as a channel for conveying to us the Heavenly, the Eternal Life."—*Benson's "Bible Teachings."*

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OCTOBER 24.

The Body and Blood of Christ.

JOHN vi. 48-58.

"I AM that Bread of Life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.[1] This is the Bread Which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. I am the Living Bread Which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever: and the Bread that I will give is My Flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat? Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the Flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His Blood, ye have no life in you.[2] Whoso eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My Flesh is meat indeed, and My Blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him. As the Living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me. This is that Bread Which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this Bread shall live for ever."

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[1] "The Israelites who ate the manna were dead, and the manna gave them no pledge of rising again. It was wholly concerned with the present life, and had no power beyond. But the Bread of Life is not for the present life only. It is the pledge of the Resurrection."

[2] "That is, no spiritual life, none of that life which the Bread of Life imparts. What a warning word is this to those who refuse to come to the Lord's Table!" —*Canon How.*

. . . "They which by Baptism have laid the foundation, and attained the first beginning of a new life, have here their nourishment and food prescribed for *continuance of life* in them. Such as would live the life of God must eat the Flesh and drink the Blood of the Son of Man; because this is a part of that diet which if we want we cannot live."—*Hooker.*

"With regard to those who have often renewed their vows of amendment, and often broken them, such persons are bound to consider the danger of such relapses into sin, but none the less, if they still earnestly desire to hold fast by God, ought they to come yet again to Holy Communion for pardon and grace (1 Cor. xi. 27)."—*Canon Woodford's Commentary.*

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Words that "are Spirit" and "Life."

JOHN vi. 60-71.

"MANY therefore of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it? When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples murmured at it, He said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?[1] It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray Him. And He said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father.[2] From that time many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the Living God. Jesus answered them, Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil? He spake of Judas Iscariot the son of Simon: for he it was that should betray Him, being one of the twelve."

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[1] . . . "If it was hard to understand how He could give them His Flesh to eat while He was with them, it would be harder, with their carnal notions, when He was gone away. Thus does He rebuke a low, carnal, literal view of the giving of His Flesh to eat, and raise His disciples to higher thoughts, leading them to see that His doing so must be after some heavenly and spiritual manner."

[2] "He would imply that those who believed not lacked that Divine drawing which alone could bring them to Him. Were they then willing to be drawn, and yet God drew them not? No; God drew them not because they were not willing."—*Canon How.*

"We know but little of the Gospel; and the hindrance to our deeper learning lies in our belief that we know it intimately. We are ignorant of its laws, and we have not searched out its spirit: we make curious inquisition into the words of man, and we are negligent of the Word of God. One sentence of the Gospel is more precious than all the literature of the world;—it is the fountain of truth. With what love, what faith, what adoration, should we give ear to Jesus Christ in His own Word! Let us then, henceforward, say to Him with Peter: 'Lord, to whom shall we go?' One moment of devout aspiration, of love, and of the Divine Presence, gives a deeper insight into the truth than all the reasonings of men."—*Fénelon.*

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OCTOBER 26.

The Feast of Tabernacles.

JOHN vii. 2-10.

"NOW the Jews' Feast of Tabernacles was at hand. His brethren therefore said unto Him, Depart hence, and go into Judæa, that Thy disciples also may see the works that Thou doest. For there is no man that doeth any thing in secret,[1] and he himself seeketh to be known openly. If Thou do these things, show Thyself to the world. For neither did His brethren believe in Him. Then Jesus said unto them, My time is not yet come:[2] but your time is alway ready. The world cannot hate you; but Me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil. Go ye up unto this feast: I go not up yet unto this feast; for My time is not yet full come. When He had said these words unto them, He abode still in Galilee. But when His brethren were gone up, then went He also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret."

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[1] "Christ's brethren thought that His doing His miracles in so retired a region as Galilee was unaccountable if He desired to obtain that renown and glory which they supposed Him to seek. They scruple not even to reproach Him with a backwardness, or, perhaps, a cowardice, in not claiming His due." —*Canon How.*

[2] "He would wait the will of His Father, and bide His time. Such too is our duty. All our times and seasons are in His hand. Do I continually bear this in mind and act upon it?"—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

"My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord" (Isa. lv. 8).

"O tarry thou the Lord's leisure: be strong, and He shall comfort thine heart, and put thou thy trust in the Lord" (Ps. xxvii. 6).

"Dost thou ask, *when* comes His hour?
Then when it shall aid thee best;
Trust His faithfulness and power,
Trust in Him, and quiet rest.
Suffer on, and hope, and wait:
Jesus never comes too late."
—"*Lyra Anglicana.*"

"Jesus waits for the time appointed of the Father. He accomplished the Father's Will by a law of action which we do not know, neither can we tell the times and seasons when He will work. . . . If we will do our part, we may trust to God to do His."—*Benson's "Benedictus Dominus."*

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OCTOBER 27.

The Teaching of Christ.

JOHN vii. 14-24.

"NOW about the midst of the Feast Jesus went up into the Temple, and taught. And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this Man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me. If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of Myself.[1] He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but He that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in Him. Did not Moses give you the Law, and yet none of you keepeth the Law? Why go ye about to kill Me? The people answered and said, Thou hast a devil: who goeth about to kill Thee? Jesus answered and said unto them, I have done one work, and ye all marvel. Moses therefore gave unto you circumcision; (not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers;) and ye on the Sabbath Day circumcise a man. If a man on the Sabbath Day receive circumcision, that the Law of Moses should not be broken; are ye angry at Me, because I have made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath Day? Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment."[2]

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[1] . . . "Thus a promise of spiritual knowledge is given to singleness and steadfastness of will. An earnest desire and striving to do what is right will help us to understand much of true doctrine (*see* 1 Cor. ii. 14, 15). Who does not know by experience how greatly the truth of Divine doctrines is borne in upon the soul when we are making real efforts after holiness; and, on the other hand, how often doubting and disbelief attend upon careless and sinful living? 'Love,' says St. Bernard, 'is the proper cure for doubt.'"

[2] "The meaning is, 'Let not personal feelings and prejudices sway your judgment. Be not led away by your love of Moses and hatred of Me, but judge honestly and candidly.' This the Jews never did."—*Canon How.*

"As you value the blessing of God, refrain from that Pharisaical spirit, which signally displays itself in a sanctified hypocrisy, in a conceited admiration of its own righteousness, and in censorious reflections upon others. Be holy, be humble, be charitable."—*Bishop Mant.*

"Let us all pray to God, that in these dangerous days He would keep us from being 'high-minded' and having 'proud looks,' that we may not exercise ourselves in great matters which are too high for us."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

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OCTOBER 28.

Prejudice and Obstinacy.

JOHN vii. 25-30.

"THEN said some of them of Jerusalem, Is not this He, Whom they seek to kill? But, lo, He speaketh boldly, and they say nothing unto Him. Do the rulers know indeed that this is the very Christ? Howbeit we know this Man whence He is: but when Christ cometh, no man knoweth whence He is. Then cried Jesus in the Temple as He taught, saying, Ye both know Me, and ye know whence I am: and I am not come of Myself, but He that sent Me is true, Whom ye know not. But I know Him: for I am from Him, and He hath sent Me. Then they sought to take Him: but no man laid hands on Him, because His hour was not yet come."

"The Jews continued blind and obstinate concerning the Will of God. . . . They persecute this Saviour and close their ears to the truth He proclaims. Let us adopt a line of conduct altogether the reverse of this. Let us not content ourselves with studying the Will of God in order to know it; but let us love it, let us respect it, let us put all our trust in it. Let us follow herein the example of Jesus; for much indeed must He have loved the Will of God, however severe it was respecting Him, since He preferred it to His own Life. It is the practice of this that He has left us in the Lord's Prayer, when He makes us say, 'Thy Will be done.' Thus we ought to feel when we use this prayer, all the weakness and corruption of our own will, which leads us but to revolt and to sin; we ought to ask fervently to be released from this heavy burden, and to acknowledge that the Will of God alone can conduct us to that happy 'haven where we would be.' . . . By this Divine Example thou must regulate thy conduct. Thou art perhaps in pain and in humiliation: God wills it; thou must submit. If thou complainest or revoltest, thou wilt assuredly embitter thy ills; if thou conformest thyself to the Will of God, thou wilt soften them, and often God annexes thy deliverance to thy conformity. Thy heart is not right, because thou willest not to raise thy will to that of God, but to draw down that of God to thine; rather raise thine to God's, and then thy soul will be upright."—*Avrillon.*

"From hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy Word and Commandment, Good Lord, deliver us!"

"Our principal, or rather our one desire, must be to follow the will of God, and this must be done even where we see not the reason. . . . Faith never shines more brightly than when it believes truths which it not only cannot test, but which are contrary to the evidence of the senses and the conclusions of reason. How admirable is this self-surrender! How it condemns our vain disquietudes, wilful eagerness, groundless fear and over-caution! Surrender we all to God, and we shall find all in God!"—"*The Hidden Life.*"

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OCTOBER 29.

"A Little While."

JOHN vii. 33-38.

"THEN said Jesus unto them, Yet a little while[1] am I with you, and then I go unto Him that sent Me. Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me:[2] and where I am, thither ye cannot come. Then said the Jews among themselves, Whither will He go, that we shall not find Him? will He go unto the dispersed among the Gentiles, and teach the Gentiles? What manner of saying is this that He said, Ye shall seek Me, and shall not find Me: and where I am, thither ye cannot come? In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.[3] He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."

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[1] "Namely, about six months, the Feast of Tabernacles being in the autumn, and the Passover, at which Feast our Lord suffered, in the spring."

[2] "When Jesus returned to His Father, the day of mercy and grace for the Jewish people was over. They had no longer the priceless privilege of His Presence among them. He was gone, and they could find Him and hold intercourse with Him no more. How well had it been for them if they had even then redeemed the time, and turned to profit that 'little while' which was left!"—*Canon How.*

"Lo! now is *our* accepted day,
The time for purging sins away;
The sins of thought, and deed, and word,
That we have done against the Lord."

[3] . . . "It is ever the law of God's best gifts that they should be desired in order to be had. The waters are only for the thirsting. Blessed thirst for which so rich a supply is waiting!"—*Canon How.*

"'Tis but a little while
And He shall come again,
Who died that we might live, Who lives
That we with Him may reign;
Then, O my Lord, prepare
My soul for that glad day;
O wash me in Thy precious Blood
And take my sins away. Amen."

"For sorrow or for joy, we shall certainly, every one of us, see Him when He returns."—*Rev. I. R. Vernon.*

"Use all the means of grace which God gives you with all diligence. They are really your introduction to Eternal Life."—*Rev. W. H. Ridley.*

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OCTOBER 30.

"The Sinner and the Saviour."

JOHN viii. 2-11.

"EARLY in the morning He came again into the Temple, and all the people came unto Him; and He sat down, and taught them. And the Scribes and Pharisees brought unto Him a woman taken in adultery; and when they had set her in the midst, they say unto Him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. Now Moses in the Law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou? This they said, tempting Him, that they might have to accuse Him. But Jesus stooped down, and with His finger wrote on the ground, as though He heard them not. So when they continued asking Him, He lifted up Himself, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her. And again He stooped down, and wrote on the ground. And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one,[1] beginning at the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone, and the woman standing in the midst. When Jesus had lifted up Himself, and saw none but the woman, He said unto her, Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee? She said, No man, Lord. And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."[2]

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[1] "They were hypocrites, and Jesus had torn away the mask from them. They saw how He read them through and through, and they dared not stay. They knew not but that He Who could thus unveil them to themselves, might, in His scorn and wrath, unveil them to the people; and they 'went out one by one.' There remained alone those two—'the miserable and the Merciful' (*St. Augustine*), the unclean and the All-holy, the sinner and the Saviour, face to face."

[2] "This does not mean, 'Neither do I condemn thy sin,' but, 'Neither do I pronounce judgment upon thee.' No one can dream that Jesus thought lightly of a sin constantly and most severely condemned in Holy Scripture. But He came to save, and not to judge. And, doubtless, seeing in the woman's heart the beginning of a true repentance, He let her go in peace, that, like another sinful woman, having been forgiven much, she might love much (Luke vii. 37, 47)."—*Canon How.*

"May He implant in each one of us in both its parts the likeness of His character; tenderness to the sinner, and abhorrence of the sin. May He form in us, by His Holy Spirit, that mind which was in Him."—*Vaughan's "Harrow Sermons."*

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OCTOBER 31.

"The Light of the World."

JOHN viii. 12-19.

"THEN spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the Light of the world:[1] he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. The Pharisees therefore said unto Him, Thou bearest record of Thyself; Thy record is not true. Jesus answered and said unto them, Though I bear record of Myself, yet My record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go; but ye cannot tell whence I come, and whither I go. Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man. And yet if I judge, My judgment is true: for I am not alone, but I and the Father that sent Me. It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am One that bear witness of Myself, and the Father that sent Me beareth witness of Me. Then said they unto Him, Where is Thy Father? Jesus answered, Ye neither know Me, nor My Father:[2] if ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also."

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[1] "Upon this sublime saying we would rather ponder in adoration than speculate in words which can never unfold its depth and richness of meaning. Those who feel in themselves the darkness of ignorance and the darkness of sin, will hail this Light with the thankful joy with which some benighted wanderer would hail the rising of the morning light."

"When in primitive times converts were baptized, which was usually in the early morning, they first, turning to the West, whither the night was passing away, renounced the works of darkness, and then turning to the East, where the sun was rising, confessed Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, and the Light of the world. It is from this primitive practice that the custom of turning to the East in saying the Creed arose."—*Canon How.*

"I heard the voice of Jesus say,
'I am this dark world's Light;
Look unto Me, thy morn shall rise,
And all thy day be bright:'
I looked to Jesus, and I found
In Him my Star, my Sun;
And in that Light of life I'll walk
Till travelling days are done. Amen."

[2] "They only knew Him by name and in words—not really—not practically. Christ bids me follow Him? Do I so? in what? Or if not, why? Is this truly to know Him?" (1 John ii. 4.)—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

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Dying in Sin.

JOHN viii. 21-25.

"THEN said Jesus again unto them, I go My way, and ye shall seek Me, and shall die in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come. Then said the Jews, Will He kill Himself? because He saith, Whither I go, ye cannot come. And He said unto them, Ye are from beneath; I am from above: ye are of this world; I am not of this world. I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am He, ye shall die in your sins. Then said they unto Him, Who art Thou? And Jesus saith unto them, Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning."

"It is the most terrible of all judgments when God leaves a sinner undisturbed in his sinfulness, abandons him to the fruit of his own ways, and 'to be filled with his own devices;' until, like a tree impervious to moistening dews and fructifying heat, he dwarfs and dwindles into the last hopeless stage of spiritual decay and death."—"*Memories of Bethany.*"

(*See* Heb. iii. 12, 13.)

"O Jesus, the only Refuge of sinners, does the world know what it is to die in sin? I believe; Lord, increase my faith; and deliver us all from the dreadful state of final impenitency."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Saviour! all the stone remove
From my flinty, frozen heart;
Thaw it with Thy beams of love;
Pierce it with Thy mercy's dart—
Wound the heart that wounded Thee,
Break it in Gethsemane!"—*Hart.*

"We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge. We therefore pray Thee, help Thy servants, whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy precious Blood. Make them to be numbered with Thy Saints in glory everlasting."—*Te Deum.*

. . . "Grant us grace so to follow Thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys which Thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."—*Collect for All Saints' Day.*

"Blind, we pray that we may see,
Bound, we pray to be made free,
Stained, we pray for sanctity;
. . . . . .
Lead us daily nearer Thee,
Till at last Thy Face we see,
Crowned with Thine own purity."

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NOVEMBER 2.

The Son and "The Father."

JOHN viii. 26-30.

"I HAVE many things to say and to judge of you: but He that sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of Him. They understood not that He spake to them of the Father. Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of Man,[1] then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things. And He that sent Me is with Me: the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him. As He spake these words, many believed on Him."[2]

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[1] . . . "When He was crucified, then the world began to learn who He was, and whence He came. One by one God's elect are being continually brought to the knowledge of a crucified Saviour. In that crucified One they learn to see the great 'I AM,' the Eternal Word, Who is with God, and Who is God."

[2] "Convinced, we may well believe, by the wisdom and power with which He spake. Yet this belief seems from our Lord's words in the next verse to have been rather a conviction of the understanding than anything deeper."—*Canon How.*

"This is an inquiring, questioning, unbelieving age. The claims of the Church, the Word of God, what God has told us of His own will and His own character,—all things, however sacred, are now examined, and called in question by the daring intellect of man. . . . It is the sight of a *living Christianity* that will best answer these doubts and difficulties. Practically, there is no argument like the holy lives, and humble, happy deaths of true believers; and even the world would confess that God is with us of a truth, if it saw the several congregations of the Church abounding in devotion toward God, and love toward man. In this way also shall we best work towards promoting the *unity of the Church.* . . . Every separate star, even the smallest and the faintest, adds something to the glory of the host of heaven; and every congregation, by its earnestness or its carelessness, helps or hinders the work of God, in spheres far wider than itself. . . . Be always ready then to offer the sacrifice of prayer and praise. Let your hearty responses and loud Amens show that you are in earnest. Draw near to the Lord's Table with faith towards God—with love towards man—with prayer for all. . . . Offer all your prayers to our Blessed Saviour, and through Him to the Father. At His feet lay down your gifts. . . . In His Name make known your requests. . . . Be like those who knew that they would be safe if they could only touch the hem of the garment of Jesus of Nazareth."—*Rev. T. Lowe.*

"Holy strivings nerve and strengthen,
Long endurance wins the crown."
—"*Lyra Anglicana.*"

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NOVEMBER 3.

Bondage and Freedom.

JOHN viii. 31-42.

"THEN said Jesus to those Jews which believed on Him, If ye continue[1] in My word, then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered Him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest Thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.[2] And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever. If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill Me, because My word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with My Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father. They answered and said unto Him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill Me, a Man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to Him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love Me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of Myself, but He sent Me."

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[1] . . . "When we were baptized, the prayer was made for us that we might continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant until our life's end, and in that Holy Baptism we were put into covenant with God through Christ. We were made very members of Christ, and so closely united to Him, that we may full surely count on His loving help. In Confirmation, too, the same word 'continue' meets us in the most solemn moment of the solemn rite. The Bishop in the very laying on of hands prays that each may continue God's servants for ever, and daily increase in His Holy Spirit more and more. When, then, you are tempted to slide backward, recall to mind Whose you are, and Whose help you have, and be sure the promise will not fail,—'The righteous shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger'" (Job xvii. 9).—*Rev. J. Erskine Clarke.*

"May I, O Jesus, love the truths of Thy Word, make the Gospel my delight, and continue in the practice of them to my life's end."—*Bishop Wilson.*

[2] "We are at once reminded of many similar passages, which speak of the bondage of sin" (*see* Rom. vi. 16-23; 2 Peter ii. 19).—*Canon How.*

"Preserve me, O God, from that fatal bondage which shameless man calls liberty. With Thee alone is freedom, Thy truth shall make us free, and give us happy experience, that to serve Thee is to reign."—*Fénelon.*

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NOVEMBER 4.

Resisting the Truth.

JOHN viii. 43-50.

"WHY do ye not understand My speech? even because ye cannot hear My word.[1] Ye are of your father the devil,[2] and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer[3] from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.[4] And because I tell you the truth, ye believe Me not. Which of you convinceth Me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews, and said unto Him, Say we not well that Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil? Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour My Father, and ye do dishonour Me. And I seek not Mine own glory: there is One that seeketh and judgeth."

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[1] "That is, 'Because ye have hardened your hearts against My doctrine till ye cannot now receive it.' This is what is called 'judicial blindness,' that is, blindness coming as a judgment upon obstinate resistance of light and grace."

[2] "Jesus now speaks His meaning plainly. Oh, terrible words! and yet most needful to be heard, that all may know whose children they make themselves when they wilfully sin."

[3] "As seeking the ruin of man and destroying souls, as well as by prompting every murder from Cain's downwards. The Jews proved themselves his children by their plots to murder Jesus, and by their rejection of the truth."

[4] "The devil is called the father of lies, because he was the inventor of lying, having seduced our first parents by the lie, 'Ye shall not surely die' (Gen. iii. 4). And is he not a liar every hour, falsely saying in the sinner's ear, 'God is not so strict as men say,' 'The pleasure of this sin is worth the risk,' 'There will be time enough for repentance,' and the like?"—*Canon How.*

"God is a God of Judgment, and we may read it, if we will, in the history of His past visitations on sinners, in the Flood, in the overthrow of the cities of the plain, in the imprisonment of the rebellious angels, in the terrible end of Balaam. Sinners, whoever they are, must take the inevitable consequences of sinning. Their present condition is one of slavery; their future one, of perdition. Great privileges, clear knowledge, holy living, a name for godliness can serve nothing to those who wilfully indulge sin, except to mark the height from which it is possible finally to fall" (*see* 2 Peter ii. 1).—*Rev. A. W. Thorold.*

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NOVEMBER 5.

The Great "I Am."

JOHN viii. 51-58.

"VERILY, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep My saying, he shall never see death.[1] Then said the Jews unto Him, Now we know that Thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the Prophets; and Thou sayest, If a man keep My saying, he shall never taste of death. Art Thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the Prophets are dead: whom makest Thou Thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour Myself, My honour is nothing: it is My Father that honoureth Me; of Whom ye say, that He is your God: yet ye have not known Him; but I know Him: and if I should say, I know Him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know Him, and keep His saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see My day: and he saw it, and was glad.[2] Then said the Jews unto Him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am."[3]

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[1] "Christ speaks of the death of the soul, for to Him the death of the body is a little thing, and not worthy to be accounted as death. The Jews naturally—for 'the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God' (1 Cor. ii. 14)—mistook our Lord's meaning, and supposed Him to speak of temporal death."

[2] "*When* did Abraham rejoice to see the day of Christ's coming? No doubt he rejoiced in faith and hope when on earth, seeing the promise afar off. It is with this his rejoicing in faith and hope while on earth that our Lord would contrast the unbelief of the descendants of Abraham."

[3] "These words . . . are of the greatest weight as a declaration of Christ's Divine nature and pre-existence. . . . They teach us that He, the Speaker of them, is God from everlasting to everlasting, the great 'I AM,' Whose existence is not measured by time, 'for a thousand years in His sight are but as yesterday, seeing that is past as a watch in the night' (Ps. xc. 4). Thus He was before (in very truth eternally before) Abraham."—*Canon How.*

"God hath revealed Himself and His good pleasure towards us in His Holy Word, sufficient to save our souls if we will believe; but not to solve all our doubts if we dispute. . . . Reason must be employed only as a handmaid to Faith: let her keep within these bounds, and she may do very good service. Mysteries are not to be measured by reason."—*Bishop Sanderson.*

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the earth and the world were made, Thou art God from everlasting, and world without end" (Ps. xc. 2).

"Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father."—*Te Deum.*

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Sight given to a Man born Blind.

JOHN ix. 1-7.

"AS Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth. And His disciples asked Him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents:[1] but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.[2] As long as I am in the world, I am the Light of the world. When He had thus spoken, He spat on the ground, and made clay of the spittle, and He anointed the eyes of the blind man with the clay, and said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam, (which is by interpretation, Sent.) He went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing."

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[1] "Plainly our Lord does not mean to state that neither this man nor his parents were sinners. His answer means that neither he nor his parents had so sinned as to bring the blindness as a punishment. The true cause of the blindness was in order that God's glory should be set forth in his cure. Thus our Lord would condemn all harsh judgments of others on account of their sufferings. These are no proof of God's anger. They are more often a proof of love. For 'whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth.'"—*Canon How.*

"All that He here does is to turn away His disciples from that most harmful practice of diving down with cruel surmises into the secrets of other men's lives, and, like the friends of Job, guessing for them hidden sins in explanation of unusual sufferings. This blindness, He would say, is the chastening of no *peculiar* sin on his part or his parents'. Seek, therefore, neither here nor there the cause of his calamity."—*Trench "On the Miracles."*

"Keep thine eyes turned inwardly upon thyself, and beware of judging the actions of others. In judging others, a man labours to no purpose, commonly errs, and easily sins; but in examining and judging himself, he is always wisely and usefully employed."—*"The Imitation of Christ."*

"Oh, what are we,
Frail creatures as we are, that we should sit
In judgment, man on man! and what were we,
If the All-merciful should mete to us
With the same rigorous measure wherewithal
Sinner to sinner metes!"—*Anon.*

[2] "Blessed be God that I have yet time! Lord, give me a heart to do good, before the night cometh, when no man can work."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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NOVEMBER 7.

Further Enlightenment.

JOHN ix. 34-41.

"AND they cast him out.[1] Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found him, He said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God? He answered and said, Who is He, Lord, that I might believe on Him? And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen Him, and it is He that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped Him. And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world,[2] that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind. And some of the Pharisees which were with Him heard these words, and said unto Him, Are we blind also? Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth."[3]

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[1] "In this man were to be fulfilled in a very eminent sense those words, 'Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake' (Luke vi. 22). He is cast out from the meaner fellowship to be received into the higher—from that which was about to vanish away, to be received into a kingdom not to be moved—from the synagogue to the Church; the Jews cast him out and Christ received him. . . . He has not been ashamed of Christ, and now Christ reveals Himself to him as He had not done before; no longer as the Prophet from God, for to this only had his faith hitherto reached, but as the Son of God Himself. Thus to him that hath is given, and he ascends from faith to faith." . . .

[2] "That is, 'I am come to reveal every man's innermost state. . . . I am the touchstone; much that seemed true shall at My touch be proved false, to be merely dross; much that for its little sightliness was nothing accounted of, shall prove true metal; many, whom men esteemed to be seeing, such as the spiritual chiefs of this nation, shall be shown to be blind; many, whom men counted altogether unenlightened, shall, when My light touches them, be shown to have powers of spiritual vision undreamt of before.'"—*Archbishop Trench.*

[3] "That is, 'If ye were really blind—unable to see the truth—then there would be an excuse for your conduct; but now ye boast of your light, and indeed ye *have* light, for God has committed to you the light of His oracles;—ye might see plainly enough, if ye would,—therefore ye are judged and condemned—your sin remaineth.' How awful a warning to those to whom God has given the light of truth, and who will not use it!"—*Canon How.*

"Lighten our darkness, we beseech Thee, O Lord!"

"The earthly jewel is without lustre till the light shines on it; so are we till the Spirit shines on us."—*Anon.*

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NOVEMBER 8.

"The Door of the Sheepfold."

JOHN X. 1-10.

"VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the Door of the sheep.[1] All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the Door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

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[1] "Not only is Christ the Door, by which the sheep are at first admitted: it is by Him also that they go in and out, and find pasture. He is the Door both of grace here and of glory hereafter. It is by Him that we first enter the Church, and by Him that we find there food and pasture for our souls, in the Sacrament of His Body and Blood, in the study of His Holy Word, in the exercise of prayer and meditation, or in patient continuance in well-doing. It is by Him also that, if it so please God, when we leave this world, we shall enter into Heaven, where He Himself, the Lamb Which is in the midst of the Throne, shall feed us and lead us unto living fountains of waters."—*Rev. Peter Young, quoted by Canon How.*

"Weary of earth and laden with my sin,
I look at Heaven and long to enter in,
But there no evil thing may find a home:
And yet I hear a Voice that bids me, 'Come.'

It is the Voice of Jesus that I hear;
His are the Hands stretched out to draw me near:
And His the Blood that can for all atone,
And set me faultless there before the Throne.

O great Absolver, grant my soul may wear
The lowliest garb of penitence and prayer,
That in the Father's courts my glorious dress
May be the garment of Thy righteousness."

—Rev. S. J. Stone.

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NOVEMBER 9.

The Good Shepherd.

JOHN X. 11-18.

"I AM the Good Shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knoweth Me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice; and there shall be one fold, and one Shepherd.[1] Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself.[2] I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of My Father."

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[1] "The true servant of God will never be forsaken by his heavenly Master. Temptations may assail him; the waters of affliction may threaten to overwhelm him; but that merciful God, in Whose counsel he has walked, will be with him. 'Fear not,' saith the Lord to him, 'for I am thy defence.' . . . The true sheep are they who hear the voice of the Shepherd, who know Him, and follow Him. With the trust, there is the obedience. God hath joined these together, and they cannot be put asunder. . . . Let us pray for the strength which shall enable us to be faithful and obedient to His will."—*Bishop Davys.*

"The King of love my Shepherd is,
Whose goodness faileth never;
I nothing lack if I am His,
And He is mine for ever.

In death's dark vale I fear no ill
With Thee, dear Lord, beside me;
Thy rod and staff my comfort still,
Thy Cross before to guide me."

"Keep me in Thy flock by Thy Almighty grace. I am one of the lost sheep which Thou camest to seek. Take me under Thy care, and restore me to Thy fold. Increase Thy flock to the honour of Thy Name."—*Bishop Wilson.*

[2] "His life, even though manifested in a fleshly form, is the very Life of God, which no man can touch. The Divine Life sustains the human."—*Benson's "Benedictus Dominus."*

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NOVEMBER 10.

The Sheep of Christ's Fold.

JOHN x. 23-30.

"AND Jesus walked in the Temple in Solomon's porch. Then came the Jews round about Him, and said unto Him, How long dost Thou make us to doubt? If Thou be the Christ, tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I told you,[1] and ye believed not: the works that I do in My Father's Name, they bear witness of Me. But ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.[2] My Father, Which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand. I and My Father are One."

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[1] "Christ had often told them with sufficient plainness who He was. It was not their heads which wanted convincing, but their hearts. What He had said to them concerning the Good Shepherd, as related in this very chapter, might have taught them who He claimed to be, had they cared to learn. He will not tell them more plainly, for He knows it would be in vain. They are not His sheep, not of those who hear His voice, and follow Him. He only reminds them once more of the witness which His own works bear to Him (*see* v. 36). This is enough for any candid truth-loving mind."—*Canon How.*

"What we are to remember is, that '*we walk by faith, not by sight*' (2 Cor. v. 7). God has never promised to make His dealings with us plain at the moment. . . . We cannot see the end from the beginning; but God can."—*Rev. A. W. Thorold.*

[2] "Oh, cleave with strong faith to these most sweet and comfortable promises of Christ our Saviour. Believe to obtain whatsoever is promised, so may you be sure to be a child of God, and heir of His everlasting kingdom; never to perish, but to have eternal life."—*Becon.*

"He who fears that God will be less than His promise, let him fear that God will cease to be Himself. . . . Fear not, therefore, O thou weak soul, that the Almighty can be wanting to Himself in failing thee. . . . He is Jehovah, and His counsels shall stand. Fear and blame thine own wretched infirmities; but the more weak thou art in thyself, be so much the stronger in thy God; how much more thou are tempted to distrust, cling so much the closer to the Author and Finisher of thy salvation."—*Bishop Hall.*

"Shepherd, Whom the Father gave
His lost sheep to find and save,
Hear us, Holy Jesu."

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NOVEMBER 11.

The Accusation of Blasphemy.

JOHN x. 31-38.

"THEN the Jews took up stones again to stone Him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I showed you from My Father; for which of those works do ye stone Me? The Jews answered Him, saying, For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God. Jesus answered them,[1] Is it not written in your Law, I said, Ye are gods? (Ps. lxxxii. 6.) If He called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the Scripture cannot be broken;[2] say ye of Him, Whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest; because I said, I am the Son of God? If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not. But if I do, though ye believe not Me, believe the works: that ye may know, and believe, that the Father is in Me, and I in Him."[3]

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[1] "The reply of Jesus is one of those broad gleams of illumination which He often sheds on the interpretation of the Scriptures. . . . He appealed to His life and to His works, as undeniable proofs of His unity with the Father. If His sinlessness and His miracles were not a proof that He *could* not be the presumptuous blasphemer whom they wished to stone, what further proof could be given? . . . Might not this be a sign to them, that He Who came to fulfil the Law and put a loftier Law in its place—He to Whom all the Prophets had witnessed—He for Whom John had prepared the way—He Who spake as never man spake—He Who did the works which none other man had ever done since the foundation of the world—He Who had ratified all His words, and given significance to all His deeds, by the blameless beauty of an absolutely stainless life—was indeed speaking the truth when He said that He was one with the Father, and that He was the Son of God."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

[2] "The Scripture cannot be broken."] "Literally, cannot be 'made void;' that is, it must have its meaning and its fulfilment. We should weigh well such words as these, in which the Son of God Himself sets His seal to the entire truthfulness of the Old Testament Scriptures."—*Canon How.*

"Almighty Son, Incarnate Word,
Our Prophet, Priest, Redeemer, Lord,
Before Thy Throne we sinners bend,
To us Thy saving grace extend.

Thrice holy! Father, Spirit, Son;
Mysterious Godhead, Three in One,
Before Thy Throne we sinners bend,
Grace, pardon, life to us extend.
Amen."

[3] "Jesus sought only the glory of God. . . . Do I in any sense do so, and then bear, as He did, reproach and shame?"—*"Daily Steps towards Heaven."*

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The Home at Bethany.

JOHN xi. 1-10.

"NOW a certain man was sick, named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town of Mary and her sister Martha. (It was that Mary which anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped His feet with her hair, whose brother Lazarus was sick.) Therefore his sisters sent unto Him, saying, Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick.[1] When Jesus heard that, He said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby. Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus.[2] When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was.[3] Then after that saith He to His disciples, Let us go into Judæa again. His disciples say unto Him, Master, the Jews of late sought to stone Thee; and goest Thou thither again? Jesus answered, Are there not twelve hours in the day?[4] If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him."

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[1] "They said not, 'Come.' To One that loved, it was enough to send tidings; enough that He knew it; for He does not love, and forsake."—*St. Augustine.*

[2] "O blessed family, to be thus loved by the Son of God! Lazarus sick; the sisters sad; yet all beloved. Welcome sickness, welcome sorrow, if only with them be the love of Christ."

[3] "This does not *look* like love. And many of God's dealings with us do not *look* like love. We marvel often at God's seeming deafness to our prayers. Yet love is in the delay or the refusal as surely as in the granting of our requests. . . . In this case the Saviour Himself declares one reason for His delay to be the strengthening of the disciples' faith (*see* ver. 15). Another reason doubtless was the conversion of many unbelievers" (*see* ver. 45).—*Canon How.*

[4] "Jesus intimates that we must not be deterred by difficulties and dangers from performing, in its proper season, the duty that God has laid upon us; and, when we walk in the way in which He has set us, we need not doubt of His protection, so far as is consistent with the wise ends of His providence, His glory, and our own and the public good."—*Bragge.*

"Let us beware of fretful, feeble anxiousness, which unnerve us for duty. Let us have a bright, manly, cheerful trust in God."—*Rev. A. W. Thorold.*

"In every hour of life, even in failure, poverty, dismay—'Fear not,'—trust, and 'Fear not.'"—*Bishop Hobhouse.*

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NOVEMBER 13.

The Sleep of Death.

JOHN xi. 11-17.

"THESE things said He: and after that He saith unto them, Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said His disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. Howbeit Jesus spake of his death: but they thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep.[1] Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him. Then said Thomas, which is called Didymus, unto his fellow-disciples, Let us also go, that we may die with Him. Then when Jesus came, He found that he had lain in the grave four days already."

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[1] "They thought that He had spoken of taking of rest in sleep."] "They understood it as the indication of the crisis-hour in sickness when the disease has spent itself, and is succeeded by a calm slumber—the presage of returning health; but now He says to them, plainly, 'Lazarus is dead.' How gently He breaks the sad intelligence! And it is His method of dealing still. He prepares His people for their hours of trial. He does not lay upon them more than they are able to bear. He considers their case—He teaches by slow and gradual discipline, leading on step by step; staying His rough wind in the day of His east wind. . . . He uses the pleasing symbol of quiet slumber before He speaks plainly out the mournful reality, 'Lazarus is dead.'"—"*Memories of Bethany.*"

"Death is continually spoken of as sleep in Holy Scripture (*see* Matt. ix. 24; Acts vii. 60; 1 Cor. xv. 51). To those who can say 'I believe in the Resurrection of the dead,' death is indeed no more."—*Canon How.*

"Christ's first coming was the beginning of the destruction of death. His second coming will consummate that destruction. His resurrection (the pledge of the resurrection of all flesh) changed the very nature of death."

"No longer let the mourner weep,
Nor call departed Christians dead;
For death is hallowed into sleep,
And every grave becomes a bed."

—*Canon Woodford.*

"Sweetly remembering that the parting sigh
Appoints His saints to slumber, not to die,
The starting tear we check—we kiss the rod,
And not to earth resign them, but to God."

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"The Resurrection and the Life."

JOHN xi. 18-27.

"NOW Bethany was nigh unto Jerusalem, about fifteen furlongs off: and many of the Jews came to Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother. Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him: but Mary sat still in the house. Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.[1] Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto Him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the Resurrection, and the Life:[2] he that believeth in Me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die.[3] Believest thou this? She saith unto Him, Yea, Lord: I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of God, Which should come into the world."

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[1] "Martha here acknowledges to a hope which she dares hardly put into words. It is too much to dare to think that 'even now' their brother may be given back to them. 'High thoughts and poor thoughts of Christ mingle here together; high thoughts, while she sees Him as One Whose effectual fervent prayers will greatly prevail; poor thoughts, while she thinks of Him as *obtaining* by prayer what indeed He *has* by the oneness of His nature with God.'"—*Archbishop Trench, quoted by Canon How.*

[2] "The full grandeur of that Bethany utterance could not be appreciated by her to whom it was first spoken. His death and resurrection was still, even to His nearest disciples, a profound mystery."

[3] "'*In Me*, death is no longer death; it is only a parenthesis in life—a transition to a loftier stage of being. *In Me*, the grave is the vestibule of heaven, the robing-room of immortality!' . . . He had unfolded to Martha in a single verse a whole Gospel; He had irradiated by a few words the darkness of the tomb; and now, turning to the poor dejected weeper at His side, He addresses the all-important question, 'Believest thou *this*?'"

"How stands *our* faith? These mighty thoughts and words of consolation—are they really believed, felt, trusted in, rejoiced over? Christian, art thou really looking to this exalted life-giving Saviour? Hast thou in some feeble measure realised this resurrection-life as thine own? Hast thou the joyful consciousness of participating in this vital union with a living Lord? In vain do we listen to these sublime Bethany utterances unless we feel, '*Jesus speaks to me;*' and unless we be living from day to day under their invigorating power."—"*Memories of Bethany.*"

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NOVEMBER 15.

The Love and Sympathy of Jesus.

JOHN xi. 32-36.

"THEN when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, He groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto Him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him!"

"Jesus wept out of sympathy for the bereaved. The hearts around Him were breaking with anguish. All unconscious of how soon and how wondrously their sorrow was to be turned into joy, the appalling thought was alone present to them in all its fearfulness, 'Lazarus is dead!' When He, the God-Man Mediator, beheld the poignancy of that grief, the pent-up torrent of His own human sympathies could be restrained no longer. His tears flowed too. . . . Weeping believer! Thine anguished heart was included in those Bethany tears! Be assured thy grief was visibly portrayed at that moment to that Omniscient Saviour. He had all thy sorrows before Him, thy anxious moments during thy friend's tedious sickness, the trembling suspense, the nights of weary watching, the agonizing revelation of 'no hope,' the closing scene! Bethany's graveyard became to Him a picture-gallery of the world's aching hearts; and *thine*, yes! *thine* was *there!* and as He beheld it, 'Jesus wept!'"

"Jesus wept! And still in glory,
He can mark each mourner's tear;
Loving to retrace the story
Of the hearts He solaced here.
Lord! when I am called to die,
Let me think of Bethany!

Jesus wept! That tear of sorrow
Is a legacy of love;
Yesterday, to-day, to-morrow,
He the same doth ever prove,
Thou art all in all to me,
Living One of Bethany!

Jesus wept! These tears are over,
But His Heart is still the same;
Kinsman, Friend, and Elder Brother,
Is His everlasting Name.
Saviour, who can love like Thee,
Gracious One of Bethany!"

—"*Memories of Bethany.*"

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The Raising of Lazarus.

JOHN xi. 38-44.

"JESUS therefore again groaning in Himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto Him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days. Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God? Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up His eyes, and said, Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me.[1] And I knew that Thou hearest Me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.[2] And when He thus had spoken, He cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.[3] And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

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[1] "Yet there is no mention of any prayer which had been heard. In truth 'He was heard before he prayed' (*Origen*). Or rather it was the *will* of Christ, which, being in unison with the Father's will, was heard and accepted."

[2] . . . "The Jews were ready to attribute our Lord's miracles to magic, or the power of Satan, so as to escape from believing that He came from God. His thanksgiving would show them in Whose power He acted. This was the first thing to convince them of, namely, that He was sent by God. Christ's prayers and Christ's thanksgivings are not for His needs, but for our instruction."

[3] (*See* 1 Thess. iv. 16.) "The raising of Lazarus was but a forestalling of the general Resurrection of the dead."—*Canon How.*

"'Lazarus, come forth!'—Far down in death's abysses
The glad soul heard,
And, like a babe new waked by morning kisses,
To life is stirred.

. . . . . .

So, without painful change or fearful wonder,
From his calm bed,
Parting the curtains of the grave asunder,
Came forth the dead;

Earnest of that far time, when, to us waking,
This life shall seem,
Amid that higher Life upon us breaking,
A strange, faint dream."

—*C. L. Ford.*

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The Supper at Bethany.

JOHN xii. 1-8.

"THEN Jesus six days before the Passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom He raised from the dead. There they made Him a supper; and Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.[1] Then saith one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray Him, Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein. Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of My burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you; but Me ye have not always."[2]

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[1] "The house was filled," etc.] "Not that house only, but the universal Church of Christ, has been filled with the fragrance of her action."—*Burgon.*

[2] "Let it be our privilege and delight to give Him our pound of spikenard, whatever that may be; and if we can give no other, let us offer the fragrant perfume of holy hearts and holy lives. . . . Let us seek to make the most of our Lord's visits while we have Him. The visits of Jesus to Bethany were soon to be over;—so also with us. He will not always linger on our thresholds, if our souls refuse to receive Him, or yield Him nothing but coldness and ingratitude in return for His love. 'Me ye have not always.' Soon may sickness incapacitate for active service! Soon may opportunities for doing good be gone, and gone for ever! Soon may death overtake us, and the alabaster box be left behind, unused and unemployed; the dying regret on our lips—'Oh that I had done more while I lived for this most precious Saviour! but opportunities of testifying my gratitude to Him are now gone beyond recall.' Good deeds performed on Gospel motives, though unknown and unvalued by the world, will not go unrecompensed or unowned by Him Who values the cup of cold water given in His Name. 'God is not unmindful to forget our work of faith and our labour of love.' The Lamb's Book of Life registers every such deed of lowly piety; and on the Great Day of account 'it shall be produced to our eternal honour, and rewarded with a reward of grace, though not of debt.'"

"*Mary gave her Lord the best thing she had!* . . . Are we willing to give Him the best of what we have—to consecrate time, talents, strength, life, to His service?"—"*Memories of Bethany.*"

"Make you His service your delight,
He'll make your wants His care."

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NOVEMBER 18.

The Visit of the Greeks.

JOHN xii. 20-26.

"AND there were certain Greeks among them that came up to worship at the feast: the same came therefore to Philip, which was of Bethsaida of Galilee, and desired him, saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Philip cometh and telleth Andrew: and again Andrew and Philip tell Jesus. And Jesus answered them, saying, The hour is come, that the Son of Man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone:[1] but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.[2] If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be: if any man serve Me, him will My Father honour."

[1] "That is, without fruit or increase. Christ compares Himself to the grain of corn. The grain by dying (as it were) in the ground brings forth much fruit. Christ by dying wins a rich harvest of souls."

[2] "This is a frequent saying of our Lord. . . . It is one of the great laws of His kingdom. Here no doubt it is spoken to show the disciples and the Greeks who were listening to our Lord, that even as the Master was to be glorified by dying, so for the servant there is no other rule. Self-sacrifice is the door to eternal life. He that loves and pampers and indulges his life here loses his life hereafter; he that renounces the indulgences of his carnal life here gains that which alone deserves the name of life hereafter. 'A life of self-denial here will lengthen out into an eternity of glory and blessedness.'"—*Rev. Peter Young, quoted by Canon How.*

"The oftener you deny your own wishes, and feelings, and impulses, for Christ's sake, the more you will advance in the life of Christ, and the greater strength you will find. On the other hand, *you never can advance without denying yourself.*"—"*Ways of Overcoming Temptation*," *by the Rev. G. Boodle.*

"The sincere disciple of Christ, who looks forward to being with Him in glory, will steadily and consistently endeavour to imitate Him and serve Him while on earth."—*Rev. A. W. Thorold's "Commentary on the Epistle to the Colossians."*

"Self-denial means resistance to our lower self; and there is in us a capacity for mastering our lower self, with the grace of God helping us."—*Rev. G. F. Prescott.*

"Think nothing in conduct unimportant or indifferent."

"Practise strict temperance, and in your transactions, remember the final account."—*Bishop Middleton.*

"Be Thou our Counsel, Strength, and Stay,
Through all the perils of our way."

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NOVEMBER 19.

"The Voice of God."

JOHN xii. 27-30.

"NOW is My soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour. Father, glorify Thy Name. Then came there a Voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.[1] The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An Angel spake to Him. Jesus answered and said, This Voice came not because of Me, but for your sakes."

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[1] "For the third time in His life came a Voice from Heaven. . . . St. John frankly tells us that that Voice did not sound alike to all. The common multitude took it but for a passing peal of thunder. . . . The Voice was articulate only to the few."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"It has been well noted upon this passage how differently to different persons the Voice of God sounds according to the state of the heart and the keenness of the spiritual hearing."—*Canon How.*

"The reason why persons so seldom hear God speaking, and sometimes even go the length of doubting whether He does speak now-a-days, is that they do not go to Him with a *mind prepared to receive everything He says*, and so ask Him to speak to them. When they read the Scriptures, they do not read them without a bias; they are determined to cleave to their old ways and habits of life, though the Scriptures should forbid them; and, as to their religious opinions, they have made up their mind upon those before they go to the Bible, and whatever the Bible may seem to say, they do not mean to change them. Or, if they think of praying to God for guidance in any perplexity, they pray with some secret inclination to one line of action, or some secret aversion to another, and are not perfectly open and ready to take any line whatever which God may indicate. Let not such persons think that they shall ever hear God's Voice. He is a searcher of the heart. . . . We must go to Him with singleness of purpose, really bent upon carrying His will into effect, however hard the doing so may be to flesh and blood, if we desire the guidance of His wisdom."—*Goulburn's "Child Samuel."*

"Whatever discipline Thy will ordain
For the brief course that must for me remain,
Whate'er the path these mortal feet may trace,
Breathe through my soul the blessing of Thy grace;
Teach me with quick-eared spirit to rejoice
In admonitions of Thy softest voice!"

—*Wordsworth.*

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NOVEMBER 20.

The Cross of Christ.

JOHN xii. 31-36.

"NOW is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out.[1] And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.[2] This He said, signifying what death He should die. The people answered Him, We have heard out of the Law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest Thou, The Son of Man must be lifted up? who is this Son of Man? Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light,[3] lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them."

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[1] . . . "By 'judgment' is meant condemnation, and by 'this world' is meant the wicked and unbelieving—those who are the true subjects of the prince of this world. For such the Cross of Christ brings only condemnation. We may mark how the Cross of Christ has, like a magnet, a twofold power, of repelling and attracting (*see* 2 Cor. ii. 16). . . . As the subjects of Satan's kingdom are condemned, so is he himself 'cast out'—cast out of his kingdom and power. In the Death of Christ is the great overcoming and spoiling of the 'strong man armed' (Luke xi. 21). . . . Man is *redeemed*, brought back from Satan's dominion, by the precious Blood of the Atonement. Henceforth a limit is set upon his power. Man, through grace, is his master." *See* James iv. 7.

[2] "Here is the attraction of the Cross. We learn from the next verse that 'lifted up from the earth' signifies 'crucified.' The meaning then is, 'When I am raised up on the Cross, I will draw all men unto Me.' But how will Christ draw? Partly by the very love begotten by the sight of His marvellous Sacrifice, but partly also by the drawing of that Holy Spirit, which He purchased for us by His death. By 'all men' our Lord means men of all nations and of all times. Thus the Greeks who asked to see Christ, receive their answer. 'Ye would see Me, and know Me,' our Lord would say, 'and ye shall see Me and know Me; for presently I shall hang upon the Cross, lifted up from the earth, and then I will draw you, and all who will, into My fold.' There is indeed a sense in which Christ may be said to draw literally '*all men*,' for He calls and invites and attracts all men; and it is not because he does not draw, but because they will not be drawn, that so many come not to Him."

[3] "That is, Arise, and bestir yourselves. Look to your footsteps, and seek the true path while you can. Alas! how are the Jewish people, who would not have the Light, wandering now in darkness, knowing not whither they go!" —*Canon How.*

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NOVEMBER 21

The Light in the Darkness.

JOHN xii. 44-50.

"JESUS cried and said, He that believeth on Me, believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me. And he that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness. And if any man hear My words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath One that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.[1] For I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father Which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that His commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak."

"The Gospel is the day; Christ is the Light of Salvation; Faith is the eye which apprehends this Light; he then that sleeps on and openeth not the eye of Faith to behold this great Light sent into the world receives it not at all; he that awaketh and openeth his eye, but ariseth not from the works of darkness and bed of sin, receiveth it in vain."—*Boys.*

[1] "That day will come suddenly. . . . The sign of the Son of Man—the Cross—shall appear in the air . . . and before Him shall be gathered all nations. . . . *We* shall be there. . . . Shall Christ, when He comes in judgment, find you, find me, find each one ready? . . . Are we living now in such a manner as to be able to turn cheerfully to Him and say, 'O God, Thou knowest my sins, my heavy and often-repeated sins, and my weakness which constantly leads me into more sin, but Thou knowest also that I do most earnestly repent and desire to repent; that I do put my whole trust and confidence in Thy mercy in Christ, that my heart seeks Thee constantly in prayer, and desires nothing so much or so ardently as to live in Thy strength and to die in Thy favour.' Is this the very, very truth of our inmost hearts. . . . ?"
—*Moberly's "Brighstone Sermons."*

"O Thou, Whose all enlivening ray
Can turn my darkness into day,
Disperse, great God, my mental gloom,
And with Thyself my soul illume."—*Bishop Jebb.*

"It is the happiness of those who follow Christ, that 'they shall not walk in darkness.' Follow Christ, and we shall follow Him to Heaven."

"The visible light of the world is the sun, and Christ is the 'Sun of Righteousness.'"—*Rev. M. Henry.*

"Lord, we beseech Thee to cast Thy bright beams of light upon Thy Church!"

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NOVEMBER 22.

The Washing of the Apostles' Feet.

JOHN xiii. 4-15.

"HE riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself. After that He poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. Then cometh He to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter.[1]. Peter saith unto Him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me. Simon Peter saith unto Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who should betray Him;[2] therefore said He, Ye are not all clean. So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."

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[1] "He who, by the discipline of self-denial and the practice of prayer, learns to wait patiently and in faith, as each trying mystery, each perplexing interruption to his course comes upon him, for the fulfilment of Christ's promise that he 'shall know hereafter'—he shall experience at last, when the final and darkest passage of all looms before him, the fulness of that blessed 'hereafter,' when faith shall be swallowed up in knowledge."—*Rev. Archibald Weir.*

[2] "And yet He washed that traitor's feet. . . . Oh most wonderful humility! Let us learn two things from this; 1. Not to scorn to do services for the unworthy and the ungrateful; and 2. To remember that an outward partaking of a holy rite, when the heart is unclean, can bring no grace, and give 'no part with' Christ."—*Canon How.*

"O merciful Saviour, Who, to abrogate the ceremonial law, didst eat the Paschal lamb with Thy disciples, and giving them an example of humility, upon Thy knees didst wash their feet; Grant that this example may make a deep impression in me; give me perfect humility: true obedience, and fervent love, whereby I may love Thee sincerely and all others unfeignedly: and be merciful to me."—*Litany of Bishop Andrewes.*

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NOVEMBER 23.

Ambassadors of Christ.

JOHN xiii. 16-20.

"VERILY, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.[1] I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with Me hath lifted up his heel against Me.[2] Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He.[3] Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send[4] receiveth Me; and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me."

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[1] "'If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them;' this is the promise annexed to every duty; and the warning here connected with every instruction is this, that knowledge without practice is vain."—*Girdlestone.*

[2] "In the forty-first Psalm, from which these words are quoted, King David is speaking of his own troubles, but these were a type and shadow of Christ's."

[3] "Few things would be so likely to shake the faith of Christ's disciples as to discover afterwards that He had suffered such an one as Judas to be among the chosen Twelve. They might have thought He could not have really known his character, or He would have driven him from Him in righteous anger. So He suffers no doubt to exist on the subject, but shows clearly His Divine knowledge of the traitor's heart."—*Canon How.*

"The past, present, and future are with Him all alike. He sees the end from the beginning."—"*The Night Watches.*"

[4] "Lord, pour Thy Spirit from on high,
And Thine ordained servants bless;
Graces and gifts to each supply,
And clothe Thy Priests with righteousness.

Within Thy Temple when they stand,
To teach the truth as taught by Thee,
Saviour, like stars in Thy right hand,
Let all Thy Church's Pastors be.

Wisdom, and zeal, and faith impart,
Firmness with meekness, from above,
To bear Thy people in their heart,
And love the souls whom Thou dost love;

To watch, and pray, and never faint,
By day and night their guard to keep,
To warn the sinner, cheer the saint,
To feed Thy lambs, and tend Thy sheep.

So when their work is finished here,
May they in hope their charge resign;
So, when their Master shall appear,
May they with crowns of glory shine!"

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Judas Iscariot.

JOHN xiii. 21-30.

"WHEN Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me. Then the disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom He spake. Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved. Simon Peter therefore beckoned to him, that he should ask who it should be of whom He spake. He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto Him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him.[1] Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly. Now no man at the table knew for what intent He spake this unto him. For some of them thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus had said unto him, Buy those things that we have need of against the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor. He then having received the sop went immediately out; and it was night."[2]

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[1] "Satan entered into him."] "That, after all, whether a literal or a metaphorical expression, best describes his awful state. It was a madness of disenchantment from selfish hopes. Having persuaded himself that the New Kingdom was a mere empty fraud, he is suffered to become the victim of a delusion, which led him into a terrible conviction that he had flung away the substance for a shadow. It had not always been thus with him. He had not always been bad. The day had been when he was an innocent boy—a youth sufficiently earnest to be singled out from other disciples as one of the Twelve. . . . He had received warnings of fearful solemnity (John vi. 70). . . . For some time there may have been hope for him; he may have experienced relapses into dishonesty after recoveries of nobleness. But as he did not master his sin, his sin mastered him, and led him on, as a slave, to his retribution and ruin."

[2] "And so from the lighted room, from the holy banquet, . . . from the presence of his Lord, he went immediately out; and, as the beloved disciple adds, with a shudder of dread significance letting the curtain of darkness fall for ever on that appalling figure,—'*and it was night.*'"—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

"O commit to God the keeping of your souls! . . . Let it not be *too late* with you. Be watchful, be sober-minded; *keep innocency, and take heed to the thing that is right; for that,* whether in youth or in age, that, and that only, *shall bring you peace at the last.*"—*Vaughan's "Harrow Sermons."*

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NOVEMBER 25.

The Eleven Addressed.

JOHN xiii. 31-38.

"THEREFORE, when he was gone out,[1] Jesus said, Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.[2] If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek Me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.[3] Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards.[4] Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for My sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied Me thrice."

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[1] "From this place to the end of the 17th chapter is the most solemn and affecting portion of the whole Gospel narrative. In it Jesus opens His heart to His chosen ones. The traitor is gone, and love—intense, overflowing love—binds now the Divine Master and His little band of faithful ones together. There is a tone of great peace and calm as well as of holy awe in these most blessed chapters. 'These were the last moments which the Lord spent in the midst of His own before His Passion, and words full of heavenly meaning flowed during them from His Holy Lips. All that His Heart, glowing with love, had yet to say to His own was compressed into this short space of time. . . . Surrounding their Master, the disciples listened to the words of Life. . . . Finally, in the sublime prayer of the Great High Priest (xvii.) the whole Soul of Christ flowed forth in earnest intercession for His own to His Heavenly Father' (*Olshausen*)."

[2] "The work of glorification had begun, for the work of the Passion had begun. . . . The Cross is so close that Jesus says, 'Now.' That Cross of shame was the Saviour's Throne of glory."

[3] "By love here—by unity there—are Christ's disciples to be known. It was so in primitive times. Then it could be said, 'See how these Christians love one another!' But what shall we say now?"

[4] . . . "'Not now,' for he lacked the courage, as was too sadly proved; 'but afterwards,' for he did indeed in the end follow his Master, by laying down his life for His sake."—*Canon How.*

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NOVEMBER 26.

"The Way, the Truth, and the Life."

JOHN xiv. 1-7.

"LET not your heart be troubled:[1] ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.[2] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know. Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life:[3] no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me. If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him."

---

[1] "Greatly must the Apostles have needed comfort, and sorely must their hearts have been troubled, for they had heard that their Master was about to leave them, that one of themselves was to betray Him, and that another would deny Him. And could any words be fuller of blessed comfort than those which follow?"—*Canon How.*

[2] "O Christ, Who dost prepare a place
For us around Thy throne of grace,
We pray Thee lift our hearts above,
And draw them with the cords of love.

Source of all good, Thou, gracious Lord,
Art our exceeding great reward;
How transient is our present pain!
How boundless *our eternal* gain!"

"There is a place for *all*, where the mansions 'are many.'"—*Burgon.*

[3] "To know Him Who is 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life,' is the sum and substance of Christian *Faith*. To be like unto Him, Who left us an example that we should follow His steps, is the perfection of Christian *practice*."—*Bishop Van Mildert.*

"Grant, O God, that I may perfectly know Thy Son Jesus Christ to be 'the Way, the Truth, and the Life;' the Author of the Way, the Teacher of the Truth, and the Giver of Life; that I may steadfastly walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life, through the same Jesus Christ. Amen."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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NOVEMBER 27.

The Reply to St. Philip.

JOHN xiv. 8-11.

"PHILIP saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us.[1] Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father;[2] and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of Myself: but the Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me: or else believe Me for the very works' sake."

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[1] "Lord, Thou hast made us *for* Thee, and our heart is disquieted till it resteth *in* Thee."—*St. Augustine.*

[2] "As the Divinity of Christ is equal to the Father's Divinity, so also is its manifestation. His very being is in all points the exact counterpart of the Father's."—*Canon Ashwell's "Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews."*

"Jesus condescends to unfold the mystery of His Oneness with the Father yet more fully to the wondering eleven in His answer to St. Philip. He knew there was no pride or obstinacy in the Apostle's faltering words; there was weak faith, but there was the desire to learn, and He Who is 'the Truth' sheds new rays of light upon the dimness of that faith. Let these rays of heavenly light fall upon our hearts, and awake in them an adoring reverence."—*Canon How.*

"It is by doing God's will that we learn to know more and more concerning Him. The promise is that to him that hath shall more be given, and this promise is being ever fulfilled to Christ's saints. They are continually advancing from strength to strength by the power of the Lord. But so long as we are in this world our sight of the future will be clouded by the trials which must ever be our portion; our knowledge of God will be obscured, because now we see through a glass darkly; but before us there is Light from the Throne of God encouraging us to persevere; within us there is the power of God enabling us to fight the good fight of faith; round about us the Arms of Divine Love to protect us from every danger, which would be more than our strength could bear. Let us then ever strive to realize that we must learn here to become like the saints in Heaven,—learn here to root out from our hearts whatever would hinder our entrance into Heaven. There is no repentance in the grave, and amid the trials and temptations of this world we have to become in heart and mind what we shall remain throughout the countless ages of a never-ending eternity."—*Canon Gregory.*

"Christ is God, stooping to the senses, and speaking to the heart of man."—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

"Let your glad obedience prove
How much you owe, how much you love."

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NOVEMBER 28.

Prayer in the Saviour's Name.

JOHN xiv. 12-15.

"VERILY, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do;[1] because I go unto My Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in My Name,[2] that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in My Name, I will do it. If ye love Me, keep My commandments."[3]

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[1] "The Apostles did no works more wonderful in themselves than those Christ had done. Even when they did miracles like His, they did them in His Name, and not in their own. The 'greater' must then refer to the *effects* of their works. For it was God's will that after the Ascension more marvellous results should follow the outpouring of the Holy Spirit than were effected by our Lord's most wonderful miracles. Thus neither the Feeding of the five thousand, nor the Raising of Lazarus, produced such fruit as the vast ingathering of Pentecost upon St. Peter's preaching."

[2] "In obedience to this saying, the Church concludes all her prayers to the Father with the words, 'through Jesus Christ our Lord,' or the like. . . . It must always be remembered that the 'whatsoever' here, as the 'anything' in the next verse, must have its limits in the wisdom and love of God."—*Canon How.*

"When we offer our prayers through His mediation, it is then He that prays, His Love that intercedes, His Blood that pleads,—it is He Who obtains all from His Father."

"He that has learned to pray as he ought has got the secret of a holy life."—*Bishop Wilson.*

[3] "Is your love for the Saviour something more and deeper than a mere sentimental appreciation of the beauty of His character? . . . Do you live much with Him, and love to live with Him, in thought and in prayer? Do you honour Him by drawing Him into use in all His offices of Grace? Can you yield up your will into His hands, to choose for yourself nothing else than He chooses for you? Does the satisfaction of trying to please Him—an effort which is never made in vain—excel every other in a certain high and pure flavour? These are the questions which must determine the genuineness of our love for Him, and genuine love is the only safe evidence of genuine faith in Him. And on faith in Him is suspended our salvation."—*Goulburn's "Pursuit of Holiness."*

"Tell Him your desire to love Him; it is the best of prayers, the most acceptable of all, the most surely answered."—*Vaughan's "Harrow Sermons."*

"All authority is given to Christ in heaven and earth. Prayer in Christ's Name is as the word of a king."—*Benson's "Benedictus Dominus."*

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NOVEMBER 29.

"The Spirit of Truth."

JOHN xiv. 16-21.

"AND I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of Truth;[1] Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless:[2] I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day[3] ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you. He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me: and he that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him."

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[1] "It may be said that the Holy Spirit's office divides itself into two great divisions answering to the two great parts of man's spiritual nature. These are commonly called the mind and the heart,—the mind being that part which knows and thinks and reasons, the heart that part which feels and wills and acts. The Holy Spirit's work is with both. He enlightens the mind; and He sanctifies the heart. To the former He is the Spirit of Truth; to the latter the Spirit of Holiness. The effect of His work in the former is a right faith; in the latter a right practice."—*Canon How.*

[2] "The coming of the Spirit was in truth not so much in order to supply His place when absent, as to make Him present in a nearer and more blessed way."—*Rev. Peter Young.*

[3] "By 'that day' is meant the time when the Comforter should come to enlighten their understandings. Then would they no longer say, in their ignorance, 'Lord, show us the Father,' for the Spirit of Truth would teach them to know the perfect unity between the Father and the Son,—a unity so close that the Son Himself declares, 'I am in the Father.' But this is not all. For the same Divine Spirit would teach them a still more blessed truth, even that of *their own* spiritual oneness with their Lord,—'ye in Me, and I in you.' There have been those who would explain away these deeply mysterious and awful expressions, which we meet with so often in the New Testament, speaking of them as Eastern modes of expression, not to be taken too literally, and the like. This is a most dangerous way of dealing with God's Word. Let us accept such language in all humility, and, believing that it speaks of deep spiritual truths and realities, pray that we may by the help of the Spirit of Truth enter more and more fully into its meaning and blessedness."—*Canon How.*

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NOVEMBER 30.

"The Comforter."

JOHN xiv. 22-26.

"JUDAS[1] saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love Me, he will keep My words: and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him.[2] He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings: and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's Which sent Me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, Which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in My Name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."[3]

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[1] "Judas."] "St. Jude still, as it seems, looked for some outward visible manifestation of Christ as king. Even the Apostles were very slow in shaking off their old Jewish notions of a Messiah who should be a great temporal king and deliverer of his people (*see* Acts i. 6). This 'Judas' is the same as 'Lebbæus' of St. Matthew (x. 3)."

[2] . . . "However little we can bear witness to our own personal experience of the exalted truth here revealed, let us bow in all humility before the Divine word, and, if we doubt, doubt—not the reality of the promise, but the fitness of our own hearts for the presence of the Heavenly Guest."—*Canon How.*

[3] "He will enable you to understand all those parts of My speeches which are now obscure, and put you in mind of all things which I have now said to you, how they are fulfilled, and what they mean."—*Dr. Hammond.*

"Our Blest Redeemer, ere He breathed
His tender last farewell,
A Guide, a Comforter, bequeathed
With us to dwell.

And His that gentle voice we hear,
Soft as the breath of even,
That checks each fault, that calms each fear,
And speaks of Heaven.

And every virtue we possess,
And every conquest won,
And every thought of holiness,
Are His alone.

Spirit of purity and grace,
Our weakness, pitying, see;
O make our hearts Thy dwelling place,
And worthier Thee."

"O praise the Father; praise the Son;
Blest Spirit, praise to Thee;
All praise to God, the Three in One,
The One in Three. Amen."

"When you have any difficult duty to perform—any strong temptation to encounter, O say to God Himself, from the very bottom of your hearts, 'Give me, O God, at this time, for Jesus Christ's sake, Thy Holy Spirit."—*Vaughan's "Harrow Sermons."*

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DECEMBER 1.

"The Peace of God."

JOHN xiv. 27-31.

"PEACE I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.[1] Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away, and come again unto you. If ye loved Me, ye would rejoice, because I said, I go unto the Father: for My Father is greater[2] than I. And now I have told you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh,[3] and hath nothing in Me.[4] But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave Me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."

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[1] "The world promises peace, but it never redeems the pledge. True, the world affords a few slight and transient pleasures, but their cost is heavier than their worth. Jesus Christ alone can make man at peace. He gives harmony within; He subjects passion and restrains desire; He bestows the consolations of His love; He gives joy in the midst of suffering—a joy that none can take away."—*Fénelon.*

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, *Peace.*"

"It must be Thy Spirit, O Prince of Peace, that must put us into possession of this Thy last and dying legacy. O give me this peace, which the world cannot give, which passeth all understanding; the peace and pleasure of being in the favour of God; and that I may possess my soul in peace, in the midst of the temptations . . . of this present evil world; and let this peace which Thou hast purchased with Thy precious Blood, be with me, and with Thy whole Church evermore. Amen."—*Bishop Wilson.*

[2] "Greater."] . . . "In His *Manhood* He is inferior to God: 'Equal to the Father as touching His Godhead, but inferior to the Father as touching His Manhood' (*Athanasian Creed*). St. Augustine states this great doctrine most forcibly thus:—'Concerning the Word I repeat what ye already know; "The Word was God;" here is that which is equal to the Father. But "The Word was made flesh;" here is that which is inferior to the Father. So the Father is both equal and greater; equal to the Word; greater than the flesh; equal to Him by Whom He made us; greater than He Who was made for us.'"

[3] "Satan was returning for a last conflict with the Son of God."

[4] "These words must be taken in close connection with the next verse, the whole sense of the passage being as follows: 'Satan cometh to put forth all his strength against Me, and he cannot prevail against Me, for he can find no sin in Me. Nevertheless, I shall suffer him to effect the death of My Body, in obedience to the will of the Father that I should die for the world, and thus the world shall know that I love the Father.'"—*Canon How.*

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The Vine.

JOHN XV. 1-8.

"I AM the true Vine,[1] and My Father is the Husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away:[2] and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in Me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered;[3] and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is My Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples."

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[1] "Marvellously instructive is the figure here used. Its great leading lesson is that of the spiritual unity between Christ and His Church. When Christ says, 'I am the true Vine,' He speaks of stem and branches together, joining His people in a blessed oneness with Himself. His Church is His Body, and this He counts as part of Himself. (See this truth most strongly asserted by St. Paul under the image of the marriage union, in Eph. v. 30.) Under the Old Covenant the Jewish people were God's Vine (*see* Ps. lxxx., and Isa. v. 1-7). Now Christ declares that they were but a type of the 'true Vine,'—even Himself and His Church, in which the ancient types and shadows found their fulfilment and reality. We must not omit to notice the bearing which this solemn discourse on union with Christ has upon the great sacramental act of union but just before instituted."

[2] "Note well that there are branches *in Christ* which bear not fruit. Every baptized Christian has been *grafted* into Christ,—made a branch in His Vine. . . . It is not every graft that lives, nor every one that lives that thrives, nor every one that lives and thrives for a time that ends in bearing good fruit."

[3] "Withered," etc.] "An awful picture of the end of the man who has forsaken Christ! There is first the spiritual death—the withering; then the eternal death—the burning."—*Canon How.*

"Oh for more faith, more of the principle which cleaves closely in trust, and affiance, and self-surrender to the Lord! It is not in the use of means, generally speaking, that religious persons are deficient; but it is in that believing use of them which recognizes Him as the only Source of Grace and Life, and having done His will in simplicity, assures itself of the blessing. O True Vine, let us cleave to Thee with such a faith, so that the virtue which is in Thee may pass into our souls, and that we may bring forth much fruit to the glory of God the Father! Amen."—*Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion."*

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DECEMBER 3.

Friends of Christ.

JOHN xv. 9-15.

"AS the Father hath loved Me, so have I loved you: continue ye in My love. If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that My joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.[1] Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.[2] Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of My Father I have made known unto you."

---

[1] "So is it with true Christian hearts;
Their mutual share in Jesus' blood
An everlasting bond imparts
Of holiest brotherhood:
Oh! might we all our lineage prove,
Give and forgive, do good and love,
By soft endearments in kind strife
Lightening the load of daily life!"—*Keble.*

[2] "With them that believe God and keep His commandments, God entereth into a league and covenant of friendship; for faith and obedience are those very things that qualify us for His friendship. 'Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God.'"—*Bishop Sanderson.*

"Friend of the friendless and the faint!
Where should I lodge my deep complaint?
Where but with Thee, Whose open door
Invites the helpless and the poor?

Did ever mourner plead with Thee,
And Thou refuse that mourner's plea?
Does not that word still fixed remain,
That 'none shall seek Thy face in vain?'"

—*Cowper.*

"None can become the friend of God without having laboured to amend himself."—*St. Augustine.*

"O Saviour of the world, Who by Thy Cross and Precious Blood hast redeemed me, save me and help me, I humbly beseech Thee, O Lord."

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"Love one another."

JOHN xv. 16-19.

"YE have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in My Name, He may give it you. These things I command you, that ye love one another.[1] If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."

---

[1] "Look upon every person you meet or converse with as one for whom Christ died. This will not only keep you from all injury, but engage you to acts and endeavours of love to the souls and bodies of all men."—*Adams's "Private Thoughts."*

"We shall never know a true peace or an enduring joy, till, with simplicity and sincerity, we love our neighbour and repose in God,—till charity has conquered selfishness and piety has conquered unbelief. When we reach that point—and we may all reach it if we try—when we love our brother and trust our Father, our joy will rise like a fountain night and day. Why should we brood over our own petty miseries and annoyances when our neighbours are suffering so many greater miseries, which, because we love them, we can help them to bear? Why should we fret about the future, when we know that God will take thought for it and for us? . . . The one secret of a blessed life lies in obedience to the Christian law, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself.'"—*S. Cox.*

. . . "Let us leave off hiding our faces from what the world dislikes to see,—from the poor, the mean, the sickly, the disappointed,—from whatever is 'despised and rejected of men;' but rather welcome such persons, and wait upon them to the very best of our power, as beholding in them, after a sort, so many images and representations of our despised and rejected Saviour. . . . Let us take up our Cross boldly, . . . steadily persisting that we will judge of our duty by the rules of the Gospel and not of the world. Let us fear nothing so much as rude or insincere treatment of the Cross; for on our portion in it depends our only hope of escaping eternal ruin."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

"Where the love of our neighbour is not, neither is there the love of God. Examine thyself. Is thy love like that of Christ to thee, Whose body we are, one in Him? (1 John iv. 20; Rom. xii. 5.)"—*"Daily Steps towards Heaven."*

"We love our neighbour after a Christian manner, when we love him for God's sake, and for God's sake do him good."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"Love ought to be the one habit of a Christian's mind. It is a shame to him to betray ambitious, envious, contentious dispositions."—*Simeon.*

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DECEMBER 5.

"The Offence of the Cross."

JOHN xv. 20-27.

"REMEMBER the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you;[1] if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for My Name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me. If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke[2] for their sin. He that hateth Me hateth My Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their Law, They hated Me without a cause (Ps. lxix. 4). But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, Which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of Me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with Me from the beginning."

---

[1] "The Cross has ever been a thing unaccountable to those who judge by the rules of the world and the flesh; and in such measure as any are permitted to have but the smallest part of it laid upon them, they must be content to seem unaccountable also."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

"If a man is devout, if he is zealous for the faith, if he strives with all his powers to be blameless in life and spirit, if he gives liberally to missionary work, worldly men see in him an enthusiast, a visionary, or fanatic. The power of an unseen Lord, thoughts of the world to come, have no power with them."—*Rev. Wm. Benham's "Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles."*

"Only let us take heed that we give no cause for the hatred of the world. Let us be watchful that we never provoke persecution, that we take no pride in being persecuted, that we seek rather to be beloved than hated, that we give no one needlessly any manner of offence. Let the servant herein follow the example of his Master, Who took pains not to provoke but to conciliate His enemies. . . . We ought to be content to suffer when we must, but anxious to escape when conscientiously we may."—*Girdlestone.*

[2] "No cloke."] "That is 'no excuse,'—nothing to cover them, and to render their sin less hateful. Christ Himself throws this 'cloke' over those ancient heathen cities which had never heard His voice (*see* Matt. x. 15; xi. 20-24). The sin here spoken of seems to be specially that of hatred towards Christ and His disciples."—*Canon How.*

. . . "The more clearly a man knows the will of God, the more guilty he is if he does not do it."—*Bishop Moberly.*

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DECEMBER 6.

Forewarnings.

JOHN xvi. 1-6.

"THESE things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended. They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service. And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor Me. But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them. And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you. But now I go My way to Him that sent Me; and none of you asketh Me, Whither goest Thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart."[1]

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[1] "Our Lord here tells His disciples both what they would have to suffer, and His reasons for warning them beforehand. . . . It is profitable then for us also to know, that what here we suffer is no more than what our Lord has foretold. It may prevent our being made to stumble, if we are aware of what offences are in our path. It may help us in bearing the cross of Christ, if we are aware that He warned us we must bear it. To be disciples of Christ in the very heart is not the sure road to worldly wealth, or ease, or peace. It will indeed give within a heavenly composure; but without, it often exposes us to tribulation and anxiety, to hatred and scorn and persecution. . . . He was Himself aware that such would be the case. He has told us, in order that we might be aware of it. He held out no delusive hopes of unmingled happiness on earth. And the very certainty which we hence have of His knowing all the future, should convince us that He does in all things what is best. The suffering here spoken of by Christ was to be fulfilled on the disciples as soon as He should go away from them. And at these tidings their hearts were so filled with sorrow that they could not so much as ask Him, 'Whither goest Thou?' Yet it was expedient, it was profitable, that He thus should go away. For on His departure He engaged to send both to them and to us the Holy Ghost, 'the Comforter.' . . . Could anything more clearly prove that the Son and the Holy Ghost are equal, than that it is good for us that one should go, in order that we may have the gift of the other? Be with us then, blessed Comforter, in all our troubles and adversities; be with us, Thou Holy Spirit, in all our trials and temptations! Be to us all that Christ was when on earth, all that we can need now that He is gone up to heaven!"—*Girdlestone.*

"Leave God to order all thy ways,
And hope in Him whate'er betide;
Thou'lt find Him in the evil days
An all-sufficient Strength and Guide."
—"*Able to Save.*"

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DECEMBER 7.

"The Holy Ghost, the Comforter."

JOHN xvi. 7-15.

"NEVERTHELESS I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you. And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on Me; of righteousness, because I go to My Father, and ye see Me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth:[1] for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify Me: for He shall receive of Mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are Mine: therefore said I, that He shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you."

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[1] . . . "He will supply what is wanting; He will help you to put all together, in such form as may most glorify God, and do most good to the souls of His redeemed. What you now behold dimly and faintly, you will then see in all clearness. The Holy Ghost will cast His light upon all that has been said and done before, and will show you all as it really is. St. John takes notice of this often in his Gospel, as concerning *single events* in our Lord's life; as about His entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday (*see* John xii. 16; ii. 22). What St. John tells us here concerning *special events and sayings*, our Lord tells us concerning the whole Gospel of His kingdom. It was not to be complete, it was not to be understood, until the Holy Ghost should come down and fill the hearts and souls of the disciples. . . . Christmas, Good Friday, Easter Day, Ascension Day, all the great days of our Lord's Life, needed that one great Day more, to make us understand, and reverence, and love them as we ought. But when that one great Day more came, the work would be complete. The kingdom of heaven from that moment would be regularly and entirely set up in the earth. . . . Until the consummation of all by our Lord's coming to judgment and our rising again from the dead, nothing can or will happen so great as the things which we remember at Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascensiontide, Pentecost."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

"The gift of the Spirit at and since the day of Pentecost, was, and is, something *totally* distinct from anything before that time—a new and better dispensation."—*Alford.*

"O Lord, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee; mercifully grant that Thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

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DECEMBER 8.

Sorrow and Joy.

JOHN xvi. 16-22.

"A LITTLE while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me, because I go to the Father.[1] Then said some of His disciples among themselves, What is this that He saith unto us, A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me: and, Because I go to the Father? They said therefore, What is this that He saith, A little while? we cannot tell what He saith. Now Jesus knew that they were desirous to ask Him, and said unto them, Do ye inquire among yourselves of that I said, A little while, and ye shall not see Me: and again, a little while, and ye shall see Me? Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy.[2] A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."

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[1] "Of this verse St. Augustine says, 'It may be understood first of Christ's Death and of the joy of the disciples in His Resurrection. But it is better and far more perfectly fulfilled in His Ascension,'—the 'little while' of the Church's travail. It seems long to us, because it is yet going on: when it shall be ended, we shall feel how little it has been."

[2] . . . "We find the Apostles mourning and weeping on the very Resurrection morning (Mark xvi. 10). The world meanwhile rejoiced, thinking it had won the victory. How often is this scene repeated! Christ's Church weeps and laments, and the world is triumphant; yet the darkest hours are but for 'a little while,' and then the light breaks out again, and sorrow is turned into joy; the very sorrow itself becomes a matter of rejoicing for the blessing it leaves behind it."—*Canon How.*

"Amid the darkest cloud that rolls,
Faith whispers peace to troubled souls;
Faith *sees* the awful, gracious Form,
That stills the sea and rules the storm;
Hope in the judgment-blast is borne,
And peace is nearest then, when hearts are most forlorn."

—*G. M.*

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Asking.

JOHN xvi. 23-27.

"AND in that day ye shall ask[1] Me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in My Name, He will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in My Name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.[2] These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in My Name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: for the Father Himself loveth you, because ye have loved Me, and have believed that I came out from God."

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[1] "This first 'ask' means 'ask questions.' In the other places it means 'ask in prayer.' So what our Lord here says is, that in the day of enlightenment by the Holy Spirit the Apostles would no longer need to seek from Him an explanation of their doubts and difficulties, since the 'Spirit of Truth' would make all things plain to them. He then goes on to speak of the blessedness of prayer in His Name, probably referring chiefly to that very enlightenment of the Spirit which He had long before said God would give to those that ask Him (*see* Luke xi. 13, and compare James i. 5)."

[2] "Observe, the Prayer our Lord Himself had taught them was not *in words* offered in His Name. It could not be before the Atonement was wrought which wins acceptance for all our prayers. But, being His own words, the Lord's Prayer is now *in effect* most truly offered through Him. 'Ask, and ye shall receive' is not merely a repetition of the words in the Sermon on the Mount, for here the meaning is, 'Ask *in My Name*, and ye shall receive.' The Sacrifice is just about to be offered; and now Jesus teaches its all-prevailing power. The certainty that our prayers are answered in love and wisdom for Christ's sake is a new source of joy beyond that of the sense of Christ's presence" (*see* ver. 22).—*Canon How.*

"These are what I ask, O God and Father, above all things, for myself, and for all that have desired my prayers: that we may be restored to Thy likeness, and never deface it by our sins; that the image of Satan may be destroyed in us: that all carnal affections may die in us: and that all things belonging to the Spirit may dwell in our hearts by faith; that Thy Name, and the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, may be glorified in us, and we in Him; that our hearts may be entirely Thine; that we may never grieve Thy Holy Spirit; but that we may continue Thine for ever, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."—*Bishop Wilson.*

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DECEMBER 10.

"Trouble and Triumph."

JOHN xvi. 28-33.

"I CAME forth from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go to the Father. His disciples said unto Him, Lo, now speakest Thou plainly,[1] and speakest no proverb. Now are we sure that Thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask Thee: by this we believe that Thou camest forth from God. Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?[2] Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation:[3] but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

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[1] "Now speakest Thou plainly."] . . . "The last words our Saviour had uttered seemed to them plain, and were doubtless plainer than some of His words; yet so little did they understand His sayings that, as St. Augustine says, 'they did not so much as understand that they understood them not.' They mistook a little ray of light for the fires of Pentecost."

[2] "That is, 'Have ye so strong and clear a faith?' The question is asked in loving sadness, for He who knew their hearts knew how really weak and dim their faith was."

[3] "The joy and peace spoken of are not to be *outward* joy and peace. Outwardly Christ's people must have tribulation,—often more tribulation than the wicked. But this cannot rob them of their inward joy and peace" (*see* 1 Pet. i. 6).—*Canon How.*

"Jesus hath overcome death, therefore death and the grave have become the gate of everlasting life. Jesus hath overcome the world, therefore all its troubles and sorrows, which, as the natural fruit of sin, still continue unchanged in their nature, are now, in Christ's use of them, turned into a blessed means of discipline and of needful trial for all His people. . . . Wherefore be of good cheer. All things are working for your good, and for the good of Christ's Church. Never be cast down, or alarmed, or even low-spirited. There will be great and sore troubles, perhaps, to you and to the Church of Christ here before you die. Lift up your hearts, lift them up unto the Lord; it is right and meet so to do. Never ought a Christian to be trifling and vain; never ought he to be down-hearted or sad. He is safe in the hands of Jesus, and the Church is even safer in times of trial than in times of great outward prosperity. '*No gold is safer than the gold in the crucible.*'"—*Rev. George Venables.*

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DECEMBER 11.

The Saviour's Prayer.

JOHN xvii. 1-5.

"THESE words spake Jesus, and lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come;[1] glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee: as Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God,[2] and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent. I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.[3] And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was."

"Few passages in all God's Word are so sublime or so affecting as this. Simple in language yet full of deep meaning,—a prayer spoken to the Father by the Son as our great High-Priest interceding for us, yet spoken aloud that it might be recorded for our instruction and example,—its every word should be thoughtfully and prayerfully pondered."

[1] "Nearer and nearer had been drawing that hour—the heaviest laden with awful agony, yet the heaviest laden also with triumph and glory, in all the world's history. Again and again had Jesus announced its near approach; yet ever through the agony shone out the glory. The way to the Crown was through the Cross; yet the Cross was lit with the brightness of the Crown, till, when it came very close to Him in Gethsemane, its black shadow was suffered for a moment to hide all the glory beyond. But this was not quite yet. Mark how Jesus prays for that which He sees clearly before Him. Promise never shuts out prayer. In the glorifying Jesus doubtless foresees not only His Death, though that was necessary to His glory, but His Resurrection, His Ascension, and the coming of the Holy Ghost."

[2] "To *know* God—by which is meant no mere head knowledge, but a deep personal abiding union with Him through faith and by the Holy Spirit—this is (in present possession, not in mere future expectation) 'life eternal.' The life which shall live on for ever in heaven is actually begun here below in those who thus know God. So Christ says of him that believeth on Him, as well as of him that eateth His Flesh and drinketh His Blood,—that he '*hath* everlasting life'" (*see* v. 24, vi. 47, 54, and compare John the Baptist's words, iii. 36).

[3] "These words, and indeed much of this great Prayer, like so many of our Lord's later sayings, . . . are spoken by anticipation, that is, before the time when they are fully accomplished. Christ stands, 'as it were at the end of His accomplished course, and looks back on it all as past' (*Alford*)."—*Canon How.*

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DECEMBER 12.

Prayer for His Disciples.

JOHN xvii. 6-10.

"I HAVE manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word. Now they have known that all things whatsoever Thou hast given Me are of Thee. For I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me. I pray for them: I pray not for the world,[1] but for them which Thou hast given Me; for they are Thine. And all Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine; and I am glorified in them."[2]

"He prays for His own, because they were committed to Him, the Good Shepherd, and because they love Him and keep His Word. If thou wouldst have Jesus as thine Advocate, see that thou art truly His, and that He is glorified in thee. Is this my aim?"—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

[1] "That is, 'not *now*.' Christ does not mean to say that He *never* prays for the unbelieving world; but *this* prayer is not a prayer for unbelievers. He is not now praying for the conversion of sinners, but for the unity and perseverance of saints."—*Canon How.*

[2] "What is glory? In the deepest sense of the word, it is the manifestation of God's image and character, shed abroad in our hearts now, as we are changed by His Spirit, 'from glory to glory;' to be displayed at the Resurrection presently, when we shine forth as the sun, and death is swallowed up in victory. But the more we love now, the more we shall love then; the nearer we live to God now, the nearer we shall be to God then; the more we deny ourselves for His sake now, the more He will recompense us then; the more we open our hearts to Him, and surrender our wills to Him now, the more He will glorify us hereafter. . . . Nothing so expands and deepens our nature as true love, of any kind. But love to God has a special power of its own for making the heart bigger and deeper for Him to come in, and inhabit it, and fill it out of His fulness. The eye of the mind being enlarged to take in His truth, more and more light shines in; the door of the heart being widened to receive His grace, God rains on it showers of blessing. The entire moral being is ever growing larger through the sanctifying influence of Divine love."—*Thorold's "Presence of Christ."*

"Reader! let this ever be your highest ambition, to love and to be loved of Jesus."—"*Memories of Bethany.*"

"Christ is glorified in His people by the evidence they give of His power and life in them."—*Canon How.*

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DECEMBER 13.

Prayer for the Unity of His Disciples.

JOHN xvii. 11, 12.

"AND now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to Thee. Holy Father, keep through Thine own Name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are.[1] While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy Name: those that Thou gavest Me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the Scripture might be fulfilled."

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[1] "What a perfect and loving unity of heart and mind does Christ ask for His disciples, if it can be compared to that bond of unity by which the Father and the Son are united in the One Godhead! And who will dare to despise unity, when it is thus the first great subject of Christ's intercessions!"—*Canon How.*

"I lament the sad and mournful estrangement of Christian from Christian in Thy Church below—that so many, treading the same heavenly journey, with the same glorious portals in view, should be following separate and diverse footpaths—that so many brethren in the Lord, whose interchanges ought to be all love, should be looking coldly and censoriously on one another. How much ungodly jealousy, and heart-burning, and mutual recrimination, among Thy professing people! How little of the spirit which of old provoked the testimony even of heathen gainsayers—'See how these Christians love one another!'"—"*The Morning Watches.*"

"The one Faith, once delivered to the saints of old,
Now in a thousand fragments scattered lies;
Each separate sect believes its creed complete;
And each, in hatred, with the others vies.
Once it was said that Christians loved each other;
Love was their watchword, and their banner, Love;
But now each tiny point of difference,
Doth to that Love a boundless barrier prove.
. . . . . .
Pray for the Spirit! pray! our God will answer,
For all who pray, according to His Will, are heard.
Pray for the Spirit! for He bids us seek Him;
Bids us in His most holy written Word.
Pray for the Spirit! for His Presence with us
Brings a deep peace the world can never know;
Fills us with love and charity to all men;
Bids us rejoice, through every trial below.
Pray for the Spirit! that by His sacred guidance,
The truth of God may sound from pole to pole;
And all His saints, once more in faith united,
May in His Presence stand, one glorious whole."—*A. J. S.*

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DECEMBER 14.

Prayer for their Preservation from Evil.

JOHN xvii. 13-16.

"AND now come I to Thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have My joy fulfilled in themselves.[1] I have given them Thy word;[2] and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.[3] I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.[4] They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."

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[1] . . . "The knowledge of their safety—the 'none of them is lost'—would fill the faithful ones with holy joy."

[2] "It was by this making known of God's Name, and imparting His Word, that Christ had kept the faithful ones in their faithfulness."

[3] "This is spoken as though following naturally from the last words; and so in truth it does. For it is the knowledge of God and of His Word which makes men to be 'not of the world,' and it is this which arouses the enmity of the world."

[4] . . . "It is a blessed thing to be spared the struggle, and rescued from the peril, and taken away from the evil to come. But it is still more blessed to stay, and fight the Lord's battle, and win through Him the victory."—*Canon How.*

"Deliver us, O Heavenly Father, from our evil and corrupt nature; from the temptations and snares of an evil world; and from falling again into the sins we have repented of."—*Bishop Wilson.*

"We walk on earth, and to its ways
Much time and thought are given;
Yet, amid all its busiest days,
Our hearts may be in Heaven.

Nothing so lightens the dull load
Life's urgent claims impose,
As close communion with our God;
It is our best repose.

When vexed with ills, which we despair
To baffle, or control,
The lifting of the heart in prayer
Sheds sunshine on the soul."

—*Monsell.*

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DECEMBER 15.

Prayer for their Sanctification.

JOHN xvii. 17-19.

"SANCTIFY them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth. As Thou hast sent Me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth."

. . . "The greatest saints who ever lived, whether under the Old or New Dispensations, are on a level which is quite within our reach. . . . Let us no more say querulously, as an excuse to our consciences for not prosecuting the high end to which we are called: 'God has put the great standards of holiness out of my reach.' *It is not so.* As if with the design of meeting such an objection, He exhibits to us in His Word the occasional failures and feebleness of His most illustrious servants, and gives us a glimpse of them, not only in the triumphs of Grace, but in the infirmities of Nature. Seen in plain truth, and not through the distorting medium of distance, they were 'men of like passions with ourselves,' though under the empire of principles which brought God into immediate relation with them, and thus lifted them above self and the world. Why should we not follow them, even as they followed God and Christ? Plainly the reason is not to be sought in any disadvantages under which we labour, in comparison of them. It is not that holiness was originally more congenial to their nature than to ours. It is not that privileges accorded to them are denied to us. It can be nothing but that laggardness of will, that indifference to high moral aims, that want of spiritual energy, that cheerful acquiescence in the popular standard of religion, which has caused many a soul, when 'weighed in the balances,' to be 'found wanting,' to be counted unworthy of the calling and the Kingdom of God. . . . We need not so much seek to do something religious, as *to do ordinary things in a religious manner*, cultivating high and loving thoughts of God while we do our work, and seeking to do it well, where no eyes are upon us, from the view of pleasing Him; and in all services to our fellow-men thinking of the Image of God, which lies hidden and overlaid with rubbish in their souls, as in ours, and of the enormous price of Christ's Blood, which was paid down for all, showing how high must have been God's estimation of each of them. I believe we shall never regret any amount of pains taken in doing common things as unto the Lord, and in striving to evince love to Him by means of them."—*Goulburn's "Pursuit of Holiness."*

"We must not think we need only to be '*supported*' under our affliction. Those who are pressing forwards to a better country will not rest unless they are also *sanctified* by it,—unless each successive wave that passes over them sweeps from their souls some of the dross of earth, and leaves some gift of heaven in its room; so that the 'changes and chances of this mortal life' shall be ever lifting them further from the earth, and nearer, ever nearer, to the Land of everlasting Peace."—*Anon.*

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DECEMBER 16.

Prayer for all Believers in Christ.

JOHN xvii. 20-23.

"NEITHER pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on Me through their word; that they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us: that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.[1] And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one;[2] and that the world may know that Thou hast sent Me, and hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me."

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[1] . . . "Can we read these words, and then look back upon the Church of Christ in the present day, without falling down in deepest self-abasement, and confessing that the world, when it beholds our miserable divisions, may well doubt of our faith itself?"

[2] "It is by the indwelling of the God Who is One, and Who is Love, that Christians must dwell in oneness and love. 'Our Lord seems to have a vision, if we may venture so to speak, of His Church as one body, penetrated with the Divine Spirit, radiant with the brightness of His Presence, its members living together in faith and love, the kingdom of heaven upon earth, exhibiting such a spectacle of love and holiness that the world might be led to acknowledge that they were the special objects of the Father's love' (*Peter Young*). Oh! when shall this vision be realized?"—*Canon How.*

See 1 Cor. xii. 13. . . . "Let us learn from this great Scripture the oneness of the Church as designed by Christ, and how grievously His design has been marred by our divisions. The loss of unity is the main cause of infidelity at home, and of the slow spread of the Gospel amongst the heathen."—*Canon Woodford's "Commentary on the Epistles to the Corinthians."*

"O Thou blessed 'Author of peace and Lover of concord,' do Thou, in Thy mercy, pour out on Thy Church on earth a greater spirit of unity, and brotherly kindness, and charity. . . . Bring us all, blessed Jesus, as individuals and as Churches, nearer Thyself, and then shall we be nearer one another. It is because of our distance from Thee, the great Sun of Righteousness, the Source of light and life and peace, that we, as wandering stars, are revolving in such devious and distant orbits. Give us to feel that we are all members of one mighty family, of which Thou art the glorious Head,—that, though following diverse tracks, we are sheep of the same pasture, owning the same 'Chief Shepherd,'—that, though enrolled in different ranks, we are allies in the same great army, fighting under the banner of the same great Captain of salvation. O forbid that, in these times of trouble, and rebuke, and blasphemy, . . . we should waste our strength on petty and puny dissensions! May we be led to merge the few points in which we differ in the many in which we can unite."—"*The Morning Watches.*"

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DECEMBER 17.

Last Words of the Saviour's Prayer.

JOHN xvii. 24-26.

"FATHER, I will[1] that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am; that they may behold My glory, which Thou hast given Me: for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee: but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me. And I have declared unto them Thy Name, and will declare it: that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

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[1] "Blessed 'will!' May it be accomplished in us! This verse needs more loving and thankful contemplation than searching explanation. Christ *wills;* and 'it is the Father's good pleasure' also (Luke xii. 32). If it come not to pass, on whom shall we charge it?"—*Canon How.*

"Thus He teaches you and me
Where alone the blame will be,
If, against such tender pleading,
Watchful care, and gentle leading,—
If, despite such loving kindness,
We, in wilfulness and blindness,
Still His Holy Spirit grieve
By refusing to believe."

—*Monsell.*

"Soul, fix thy faith on Jesus' love continually; . . . look upon His sacrifice as far more extensive to cover and pardon all thy sins, corruptions, and imperfections, than thy sins and omissions can be to condemn thee."—*J. Thornton.*

"O loving Lord, Who, when Thou wert to leave this world, didst comfort Thy disciples, and with ardent and affectionate prayer didst commend them to the Father, thereby showing what love Thou didst bear to them, and all others who should believe in Thee; make my heart sensible of this love, and raise in me an earnest affection to Thee, that I may be wholly transformed into the love of Thee; and be merciful to me. Amen."—*Litany of Bishop Andrewes.*

"We cannot close this most heavenly chapter without confessing how unworthy our dull hearts and dim faith are to handle such mighty mysteries. Even through our clouds of ignorance we catch glimpses of surpassing glory, and more and brighter glimpses the oftener and the longer we gaze. Yet we wait for the Light Himself to show us its perfect glory, when there shall be clouds no more. Meanwhile shall Christ thus pray for us, and all His prayers be in vain?"—*Canon How.*

"The intercession of Jesus is the golden key which unlocks the gates of Paradise to the departing soul."—"*Memories of Bethany.*"

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DECEMBER 18.

The Betrayal.

JOHN xviii. 1-6.

"WHEN Jesus had spoken these words, He went forth with His disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which He entered, and His disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed Him, knew the place: for Jesus ofttimes resorted thither with His disciples. Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons. Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am He.[1] And Judas also, which betrayed Him, stood with them. As soon then as He had said unto them, I am He, they went backward, and fell to the ground."[2]

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[1] "Those quiet words produced a sudden paroxysm of amazement and dread. That answer so gentle 'had in it a strength greater than the eastern wind, or the voice of thunder, for God was in that "still voice"; and it struck them down to the ground.'"—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

[2] "St. Augustine asks well, 'What will *He* do, when He comes to judge, Who did such things when taken to be judged? What will He be able to inflict from His throne, Who had this power when about to die?'"—*Canon How.*

"When the Judge comes to take account of us, He will come fraught with the maxims of a celestial jurisprudence, and His question will be, 'What have ye done unto Me? how much of God, and of God's will, was there in the principle of your doings?' This is the heavenly measure, and it will set aside all your earthly measures and comparisons. It will sweep away all refuges of lies."—*T. Chalmers.*

"Then let us all with earnest care,
And contrite fast, and tear, and prayer,
And works of mercy and of love,
Entreat for pardon from above;

That He may all our sins efface,
Adorn us with the gifts of grace,
And join us to the Angel band
For ever in the Heavenly Land."

"Whom seek ye?" . . . "Jesus of Nazareth." . . . "I am He."] "He knew whom they sought; but He would make them consider their guilt once more in the repeating that holy Name. More than this, He would have them, yea, and me too, seek Him ere He reveals Himself in judgment the great 'I AM' (Isa. lv. 6)."—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

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DECEMBER 19.

"The Cup."

JOHN xviii. 7-11.

"THEN asked He them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He: if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way: that the saying might be fulfilled, which He spake, Of them which Thou gavest Me have I lost none. Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?"[1]

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[1] "This was the firm purpose to which our Lord had attained by His prayer so earnestly expressed, that the will of His Father might be done (*see* Matt. xxvi. 37-46). This should be our resolution, whatever wrongs we meet with, whatever injuries or insults, whatever sorrows or sufferings are heaped upon our heads; not to meet them with revenge, but with forgiveness,—not with the violence which would wield the sword, but with the patience which would keep it in the sheath, with the love which delights to drink of any cup that is given by a Father's hand."—*Girdlestone.*

"Lay aside all murmuring; and renouncing all fleshly reasoning and inclination to thine own will, commit thyself entirely into the hands of thy God and Saviour; yea, bring every desire into subjection wholly unto His sovereign, and most wise and most excellent will: though thou beseechest Him, that, if it be possible, the cup may pass from thee, be ready, if it be required of thee, to drink it to the very dregs; thy faith shall be conducive to the glory of thy God, and thine own soul's profit."—*Witsius.*

"Only know, by the Spirit of adoption, that the cup is mixed by a Father's hand; and where is the child of God who will refuse to drink it?"—*H. Blunt.*

"Alone He drank the cup,
The Holy Sinless One,
That not one soul on earth again
Should drain the dregs alone."
—"*Lyra Anglicana.*"

"When others injure us, the cup is from God. We must not resist it, but accept it as from Him. He layeth low; He lifteth up" (1 Sam. ii. 6).

"What injury another has done, the Lord, when He will, can repair. Moreover, He teaches (Rom. xii. 17-21) to return good for evil; and now heals the ear through which His truth may be received. O Lord, open mine ears, that I may hear Thy Voice."—"*Daily Steps towards Heaven.*"

"Count each affliction, whether light or grave,
God's messenger sent down to thee."—*Aubrey de Vere.*

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DECEMBER 20.

The Saviour's Meekness.

JOHN xviii. 19-23.

"THE high priest then asked Jesus of His disciples, and of His doctrine. Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the Temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou Me? ask them which heard Me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said. And when He had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest Thou the high priest so? Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou Me?"[1]

"What sorrows did He undergo; and with what patience did He suffer them! Patient, when Judas unworthily betrayed him with a kiss; patient, when Caiaphas despitefully used Him; patient, while hurried from one place to another; patient, when Herod with his men of war set Him at nought; patient, when Pilate so unrighteously condemned Him; patient, when scourged and crowned with thorns; patient, when His Cross was laid upon Him,—when He was reviled, reproached, scoffed at, and every way abused. Lord Jesus, grant me patience, after this example, to bear Thy holy will in all things."—*Bishop Wilson.*

[1] "This calm and gentle remonstrance of our Lord forms an excellent comment upon His saying in the Sermon on the Mount, 'Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also' (Matt. v. 39). It shows that such a command is to be understood rather in the spirit than in the letter."—*Canon How.*

"O! shame beyond the bitterest thought
That evil spirit ever fram'd,
That sinners know what Jesus wrought,
Yet feel their haughty hearts untam'd.
That souls in refuge, holding by the Cross,
Should wince and fret at this world's little loss."

—*Keble.*

"O blessed Jesus, give me patiently to bear my cross, without being faint or weary; and meekness to bear with my persecutors, and charity to pray for and bless them."—*Kettlewell.*

"Patience under rebuke is one of the tokens of a subdued will and a sanctified heart."—*H. L. H.*

"Grief, nor pain, nor any sorrow,
Rends thy heart, to Him unknown."

"Let the great Master's steps be thine."—"*Lyra Anglicana.*"

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DECEMBER 21.

"The Truth."

JOHN xviii. 33-37.

"THEN Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews? Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of Me? Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered Thee unto me: what hast Thou done? Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world:[1] if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is My kingdom not from hence. Pilate therefore said unto Him, Art Thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth My voice."[2]

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[1] . . . "Our Lord does not say His kingdom is not *in* this world, only not *of* this world. All His teaching proves that His kingdom, which He calls the 'kingdom of heaven' or the 'kingdom of God,' is a kingdom here on earth, though to be perfected hereafter in heaven."—*Canon How.*

[2] . . . "Pilate, when he heard those words, did not know what we know, as concerning Him Who spake them. . . . Yet even Pilate seems to have trembled in his heart, and was possessed with a mysterious fear of doing anything to our Lord. If we then pass by His words, if we hear them carelessly, if we do not make them our rule, are we not far worse than Pilate, poor heathen as he was? . . . Hearing Christ's voice, *i.e.*, obeying it, seeking to be within sound of it, listening to it, laying it up in your hearts, recollecting it, pondering it over, and above all, doing what it commands and turning from what it forbids,—this is the token, . . . whether a man is of the truth, or no; whether he is on God's side, to abide for ever with God, or on the world and the devil's side, to pass away and perish for ever. If we do not so hear Christ's voice as to obey it, all our pretences to truth and wisdom are but a dream. . . . Ask yourselves, . . . Am I very careful not to deceive any one by leaving out things which ought to be mentioned, as much as by uttering false or hypocritical words? When I had a chance to obtain some good thing of this world by saying an untrue word or doing a deceitful act, have I always put away the thought from me, as a direct temptation of the devil, and girded up my loins, as the Apostle directs, with Truth? . . . Be not like the Pharisees, wilfully deceiving thine own self, and behaving as if thou couldest deceive God Almighty; but open thine heart frankly to Him; keep back nothing, say to Him, as one, the best of the Pharisees, once did, 'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?' (Acts ix. 6,) and having got the answer, obey it entirely, and at once."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

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DECEMBER 22.

Pilate's Power.

JOHN xix. 8-11.

"WHEN Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid; and went again into the judgment hall, and saith unto Jesus, Whence art Thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.[1] Then saith Pilate unto Him, Speakest Thou not unto me? knowest Thou not that I have power[2] to crucify Thee, and have power to release Thee? Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against Me, except it were given thee from above:[3] therefore he that delivered Me unto thee hath the greater sin."[4]

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[1] "Once more, leaving the yelling multitude without, he takes Jesus with him into the quiet Judgment Hall, and asks Him in awestruck accents, 'Whence art Thou?' Alas! it was too late to answer now. Pilate was too deeply committed to his gross cruelty and injustice; for *him* Jesus had spoken enough already; for the wild beasts who raged without, He had no more to say."—*Farrar's "Life of Christ."*

[2] "I have power."] "Pilate's brief impression of fear soon vanishes. He now speaks in displeasure at Christ's silence. . . . Pilate has again and again pronounced Jesus innocent. He now says he has power to release Him. Why then does he not exercise that power? Because in his heart he cares not for justice."

[3] "That is, plainly, 'from God.' So St. Paul says 'There is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God' (Rom. xiii. 1). Our Lord does not mean, of course, to imply that Pilate had absolute power over Him, but that the authority of which he boasted was allowed him by God, and to this authority, as ordained of God, and now exercised for God's great purposes, Jesus bows."

[4] "Behold how the Prisoner already sits in judgment upon His judge, awarding to him and to others their degrees of guilt!" . . . Pilate "was an instrument in God's Hands, unconsciously fulfilling God's decrees. *'Therefore'*—because Pilate . . . was in ignorance of the great crime he was committing in condemning the Son of God,—'he that delivered' Jesus to him, being no blind instrument in the hands of others, but having abundant means of knowing the truth, and recognizing the Messiah, had 'the greater sin.' We must not forget that Pilate's sin was great, for he was distinctly an unjust judge. But the sin of Caiaphas was greater."—*Canon How.*

"O my soul! take hence the measure
Of their misery, who can
Sacrifice their sense of duty
To the wretched fear of man."—*Monsell.*

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DECEMBER 23.

The Hour of Death.

JOHN xix. 25-27.

"NOW there stood by the Cross of Jesus His Mother, and His Mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His Mother, and the disciple standing by, whom He loved, He saith unto His Mother, Woman, behold thy son![1] Then saith He to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home."

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[1] "Oh, loving thoughtful care in the midst of the agonies of such a death! This was the hour when the 'sword' was indeed piercing through the Virgin Mother's soul (Luke ii. 35). . . . The Divine Son loved His human Mother to the last, and gave her in her hour of desolation another son to care for her, even him, whom of all His well-loved disciples He loved the best."—*Canon How.*

"He Who recommended to one another's care His Mother and His most favoured disciple, in some of His last words, when the pains of death had begun, . . . He, the gracious Son of Man, feels for and with us His poor creatures, both in our affliction on losing friends or seeing them suffer, and in the comfort we take in their presence, when we are afflicted. He had before wept at Lazarus' death; He had had compassion on the widowed mother at Nain; and now He looks down from His Cross, in the midst of His pangs, and is afflicted in the affliction of His Mother. . . . He points out one who should do a son's part by her . . . by which He teaches us, that in all our bereavements, the comfort we take in one another's presence and care comes in truth from no other but Him. It is He Who provides so wonderfully as we often see for those who would otherwise seem to be left helpless. 'He is a Father of the fatherless, and defendeth the cause of the widows,' causing continually some one to be at hand, who can more or less take the place of such as are removed by His chastisements; He will open fountains in the wilderness, and 'streams in the desert' (Isa. xxxv. 6)."—*Keble's "Sermons."*

"In all time of our tribulation, in all time of our wealth, in the hour of Death, and in the day of Judgment, Good Lord, deliver us."

"How comes it that so few comparatively, especially of those who have leisure and ability for the purpose, take any pains to live in such a way as *to be missed when they die?* Oh! think over what it must be,—after all that our dear Saviour has done for us, and said to us,—to come to die with the reflection that we have done no real good to any; that our life has been a selfish and an useless one!"—*Rev. Sir Lovelace T. Stamer, Bart.*

"Whether we live, may we live unto Thee, and whether we die, may we die unto Thee, so that living or dying we may be evermore Thine."—*Bishop Oxenden's "Family Prayers."*

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DECEMBER 24.

"It is Finished."

JOHN xix. 28-30.

"AFTER this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.[1] Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a spunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to His mouth. When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, He said, It is finished:[2] and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost."

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[1] *See* Psalm lxix. 22.

[2] "What 'is finished?' He that can answer this must be rich indeed in knowledge of Christ; for that little word 'It' contains in itself all that the Redeemer came to do—Sufferings, Life, Work, Scripture, Salvation, All!"—*Canon How.*

"The Birth of Christ and the Death of Christ are very nearly bound together; they are two links in the same chain. . . . The Death is, as it were, the seal of the Nativity; the words of Christ on the Cross, 'It is finished!' are the pledge that the work which was begun on Christmas-Day was carried unto a successful end. Strange though it may seem, yet it is perfectly true that the joys of Christmas-tide would have all come to nothing if Jesus Christ our Lord had not undergone the Agony and the bloody Sweat, the Cross and Passion, whereby He made atonement for the sins of the whole world. . . . Hence, they who would celebrate Christmas as it ought to be celebrated, must come to the Feast which Christ prepares for them; they must contemplate the great Sacrifice made for sin; they must join with Angels and Archangels, and all the Company of Heaven, in glorifying God; and then, when they spiritually eat the Body of Christ and drink His Blood, they will know something of the mystery of Christ's Incarnation."—*Sermon by Bishop Harvey Goodwin.*

"When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of Death, Thou didst open the Kingdom of Heaven to all believers!"

"Grant, O Lord, that as we are baptized into the death of Thy blessed Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with Him; and that through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; for His merits, Who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Finished was His holy Life; with His Life His struggle, with His struggle His work, with His work the redemption, with the redemption the foundation of the new world."—*Lange.*

"O all-atoning Sacrifice,
I cling by faith to Thee."

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DECEMBER 25.

The Saviour.

JOHN xx. 11-18.

"MARY stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two Angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing Him to be the gardener, saith unto Him, Sir, if thou have borne Him hence, tell me where thou hast laid Him, and I will take Him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto Him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father:[1] but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things unto her."

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[1] St. Leo thus gives the meaning of our Lord's words, spoken, as he says, through Mary Magdalene, to the whole Church: 'I will not have thee come to Me corporeally, nor recognize Me by the sensations of the flesh. I am putting thee off to something loftier: I am preparing for thee something greater. When I shall have ascended to My Father, then shalt thou handle Me more perfectly and more truly, for then shalt thou embrace what thou touchest not, and believe what thou seest not." . . .

"St. Augustine, who takes the same view, sees in the words . . . a gentle rebuke to Mary for earthly and human conceptions of Christ, as though it were, 'I am not *in thine eyes* ascended: thou dost not yet look upon Me in My Godhead as one with the Father; thou hast not yet risen to the beholding of My Divine Nature.' When any one accepts and knows Christ as God, then to such an one Christ, as it were, ascends to the Father."—*Canon How.*

"By the mystery of Thy holy Incarnation: by Thy holy Nativity and Circumcision; by Thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation; by Thine Agony and bloody Sweat; by Thy Cross and Passion; by Thy precious Death and Burial; by Thy glorious Resurrection and Ascension; and by the Coming of the Holy Ghost; Good Lord, deliver us."

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DECEMBER 26.

"Stewards of the Mysteries of God."

JOHN XX. 19-23.

"THE same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had so said, He showed unto them His hands and His side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord. Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed[1] on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:[2] whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."[3]

"The Lord is now about to give to His Apostles their solemn commission as stewards of His gifts and mysteries (*see* 1 Cor. iv. 1), and in doing so, He repeats His salutation of Peace. . . . The messengers of Christ must go forth, their 'feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace' (Eph. vi. 15)."

[1] "When God made man, He 'breathed into his nostrils the breath of life' (Gen. ii. 7). The Son of God now breathes into the souls of His disciples the breath of a new life. How full of deep meaning is this action!" . . .

[2] "That is, for the fulfilment of the commission He has laid upon them, and for the exercise of the powers He is entrusting them with. It is true that their full powers as Apostles were to be bestowed at Pentecost, so that this gift is but a sort of earnest of farther and fuller gifts to come. It seems as though our Lord desired to connect the remission of sin very closely with His own Death and Resurrection, and so proceeded at once to bestow upon the Apostles the power to convey to others the benefit of His Passion."

[3] "In these solemn words our Lord commits to His Apostles, and through them to His Church, the exercise of a godly discipline in the remitting or retaining of sins; assuring them that their sentence on earth, as spoken in His Name and with His authority, will be ratified and confirmed by Himself in heaven. . . . The doctrine of the Church of England on this subject is excellently given by Bishop Wilson, who speaks thus: 'Our Church ascribeth not the power of remission of sin to any but to God only. She holds that faith and repentance are the necessary conditions of receiving this blessing. And she asserts, what is most true, that Christ's ministers have a special commission, which other believers have not, authoritatively to declare this Absolution, for the comfort of true penitents; and which Absolution, if duly dispensed, will have a real effect from the promise of Christ.'"—*Canon How.*

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Doubts and Conviction.

JOHN XX. 24-29.

"BUT Thomas,[1] one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe. And after eight days again His disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith He to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold My hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into My side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen Me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."[2]

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[1] "He loved Thee well, and calmly said,
'Come, let us go, and die with Him;'
Yet when Thine Easter-news was spread,
'Mid all its light his eyes were dim.

His brethren's word he would not take,
But craved to touch those Hands of Thine:
The bruisèd reed Thou didst not break;
He saw, and hailed his Lord Divine.

He saw Thee risen; at once he rose
To full belief's unclouded height;
And still through his confession flows
To Christian souls Thy life and light."

[2] "This blessedness we may share, and it is a higher blessedness than that of those who saw with the eye of flesh and believed. Probably St. Peter had this saying of our Lord in his mind when he wrote those beautiful words, 'Whom having not seen, ye love; in Whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory' (1 Pet. i. 8). It has been well remarked that 'our Lord is here adding a new Beatitude to those of the Sermon on the Mount.'"—*Trench, quoted by Canon How.*

"Choose to believe, not see; sight tempts the heart
From sober walking in true Gospel ways."

—*Keble.*

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DECEMBER 28.

"The Mysterious Meal."

JOHN xxi. 4-13.

"WHEN the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus. Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered Him, No. And He said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved saith unto Peter, It is the Lord. Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he girt his fisher's coat unto him, (for he was naked,) and did cast himself into the sea. And the other disciples came in a little ship; (for they were not far from land, but as it were two hundred cubits,) dragging the net with fishes. As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread. Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask Him, Who art Thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise."

"What is the meaning of this meal which they found ready prepared for them on the shore, with the Lord's invitation that they should come and share it? It could not be needful for Him with His risen Body, and as little for them, whose dwellings were near at hand. But we must continue to see an under-meaning, and a rich and deep one, in all this. As that large capture of fish was to them the pledge and promise of a labour that should not be in vain, so the meal, when the labour was done, a meal of the Lord's own preparing, and '*upon the shore*,' was the symbol of the great festival in heaven with which, after their earthly toil was over, He would refresh His servants, when He should cause them to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom. And as they were bidden to bring of their fish to that meal, so should the souls which they had taken for life be their crown and rejoicing in that day, should help and contribute to their gladness then."—*Archbishop Trench.*

"Compare the former miracle related in St. Luke v. 1-11 and the Parable in St. Matt. xiii. 41-50."—*Canon How.*

"Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb." (Rev. xix. 9.)

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DECEMBER 29.

The Saviour and St. Peter.

JOHN xxi. 15-17.

"SO when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me more than these? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? He saith unto Him, Yea, Lord; Thou knowest that I love Thee. He saith unto him, Feed My sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me? Peter was grieved because He said unto him the third time, Lovest thou Me? And he said unto Him, Lord, Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed My sheep."

"The question, 'Lovest thou Me?' is thrice repeated, that by three solemn affirmations the Apostle may efface his three denials of his Lord."—*Archbishop Trench.*

"There are many lessons we can learn from the mingled life of the Apostle disclosed to us by meditation upon this passage in his spiritual history. The mingling of penitence and love is known to the heart of each earnest follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is well for us if we use the failures of the past, as St. Peter learned to use them, for the broadening and deepening of our future life before God. . . . Another point, which comes out strongly, is the close personal relation of the soul of the Christian to the Saviour. Our Blessed Lord spoke to Simon alone. Even though others were present, He seemed to isolate that soul for the time, and treat it by itself. He knew the special needs of that soul, and He dealt with it alone. So it must ever be in our spiritual life. There must be 'I' and 'Thou.' There must be the personal clinging of the soul to the Saviour, and the personal acceptance on the part of each one by faith of the blessed Atonement wrought out for all by the shedding of the Precious Blood and the offering of the Perfect Obedience of Christ. Let us seek, then, to profit by our very failures. . . . 'Out of weakness were made strong,' can be written upon the experience of God's servants in almost every age. Of one thing let us make sure. Let not our love towards our Blessed Lord become cool, but let us always strive to be able to say, whatever our temptations, discouragements, difficulties, and even falls may be,—'Yea, Lord; Thou knowest all things; Thou knowest that I love Thee!'"—*Rev. Wm. Baird.*

"Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee,
'Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou Me?'
Lord, it is my chief complaint,
That my love is weak and faint;
Yet I love Thee, and adore;
O for grace to love Thee more!"

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DECEMBER 30.

The Martyrdom of St. Peter foretold.

JOHN xxi. 18, 19.

"VERILY, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not. This spake He, signifying by what death He should glorify God.[1] And when He had spoken this, He saith unto him, Follow Me."[2]

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[1] "The threefold confession being graciously accepted, and the pastoral charge thrice given, Christ solemnly foretells to His Apostle the mode in which his love should lead him to follow his Lord. . . . If the tradition be true, St. Peter, when condemned to death in Rome, himself chose to be crucified with his head downwards, because he was not worthy to die so honourable a death as his Divine Master."—*Canon How.*

[2] "If the words 'Follow Me' were addressed specifically to St. Peter, are there not words of precisely similar import addressed to all disciples to the end of time? Do we not read, 'If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me?' . . . Are we striving to bring our minds to this point, when, and as, God calls us to suffer? Are we daily practising resignation as opportunity offers? By a patient and loving endurance of annoyances, are we preparing ourselves gradually for the discipline of trials? Christ comes to us morning by morning to present to us, for the day then opening, divers little crosses, thwartings of our own will, interferences with our plans, disappointments of our little pleasures. Do we take them up, and follow in His rear, like Simon the Cyrenian? Or do we toss them from us scornfully, because they are so little; and wait for some great affliction to approve our patience and resignation to His Will? Ah, how might we accommodate to the small matters of religion generally those words of the Lord respecting the children, 'Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones!' Despise not little sins; they have ruined many a soul. Despise not little duties; they have been to many a saved man an excellent discipline of humility. Despise not little temptations; rightly met, they have often nerved the character for some fiery trial. And despise not little crosses; for when taken up, and lovingly accepted at the Lord's hand, they have made men meet for a great crown, even the crown of righteousness and life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him."—*Goulburn's "Thoughts on Personal Religion."*

"Thrice fallen, thrice restored!
The bitter lesson learnt,
That heart for Thee, O Lord,
With triple ardour burnt.
The cross he took he laid not down,
Until he grasped the Martyr's crown."

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DECEMBER 31.

"Follow thou Me."

JOHN xxi. 20-23.

"THEN Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth Thee? Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do? Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?[1] follow thou Me. Then went this saying abroad among the brethren, that that disciple should not die: yet Jesus said not unto him, He shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?"

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[1] "It matters not what Christ may have in store for others. It is enough for us to see the Hand that beckons us on. We long sometimes to lift the veil of the future. Let us only ask to have it lifted so far as that we may see the path in which we may follow Jesus."—*Canon How.*

> "Till Death the weary spirit free,
> Thy God hath said, 'Tis good for thee
> To walk by faith and not by sight;
> Take it on trust a little while:
> Soon shalt thou read the mystery right
> In the full sunshine of His smile."—*Keble.*

"We cannot make spiritual progress amid distractions of heart, whether those distractions arise from a melancholy hankering after the past, or from vainly reaching forward to some better and brighter future. . . . Let our whole care be to serve God in the *present* moment of our lives; to taste the peace of the *present* pardon offered to us freely through the Blood of Jesus Christ; to meet faithfully the obligations and responsibilities which the passing hour devolves upon us; to improve to the utmost *present* opportunities either of doing or receiving good. . . . Work for God in the present day, as if your horizon were bounded by sunrise and nightfall. How avails it to linger in memory over the past, or to long for the future? The past cannot be recalled or altered. The future (of Time) may never be yours. You are master only of the present."—*Goulburn's "Pursuit of Holiness."*

> "The trivial round, the common task,
> Would furnish all we ought to ask;
> Room to deny ourselves—a road
> To bring us, daily, nearer God.
> Seek we no more; content with these,
> Let present Rapture, Comfort, Ease,
> As Heaven shall bid them, come and go:—
> The secret this of Rest below.
> Only, O Lord, in Thy dear love
> Fit us for perfect Rest above."—*Keble.*

"May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all evermore." Amen.

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"THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION."

THE Church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word:
From Heaven He came and sought her
To be His holy Bride;
With His own Blood He bought her,
And for her life He died.

Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of Salvation
One Lord, one Faith, one Birth,
One Holy Name she blesses,
Partakes one Holy Food,
And to one hope she presses
With every grace endued.

Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore opprest,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distrest,
Yet saints their watch are keeping,
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.

'Mid toil, and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore;
Till with the vision glorious
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great Church victorious
Shall be the Church at rest.

Yet she on earth hath union
With God the Three in One,
And mystic sweet communion
With those whose rest is won:
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we,
Like them the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with Thee. Amen.

—*Rev. S. J. Stone.*

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